

Śrīla Prabhupāda lilāmṛta Volume 6

—UNITING— TWO WORLDS

*īha yasya harer dasye
karmana manasa gira
nīkīlasy apy avasthasu
jīvan muktah sa ucyate*

A person acting in the service of Kṛṣṇa with his body, mind and words is a liberated person, even within the material world

—Bhakti rasamṛta sindhu 1 2 187

Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, Volume 6

—UNITING— TWO WORLDS

*Around the World /
Return to Vṛndāvana
1975-1977*

A Biography of
His Divine Grace
**A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda**

Founder-Ācārya of
The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami



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Foreword

This volume in the life story of Śrīla Prabhupāda reveals many major events and themes in his life. It tells of his distribution of spiritual knowledge through his writings, of his struggle to establish the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in his native country, India, and of his averting a potential schism among his followers. Through all these events he emerges as an imaginative, resourceful teacher equipped with the deepest understanding of his tradition, and thus we see how this indomitable personality imparted stability and confidence to all who contacted him.

These pages tell the story of a visionary spiritual teacher who understood the chaos of the present day civilization and who resuscitated spiritual values in the face of the materialistic values of consumerism and hedonism now dominating society. We meet in this volume a saint, indiscriminately inspiring the humanity that surrounds him with purpose of life, and offering them not a mere theory but a practical way of living. We also see how, even though physically indisposed in his last year, Śrīla Prabhupāda nobly continued to offer his life as an inspiring example up until his last day on earth.

We all know that religion should be a way of life. But a religious way of life becomes easier to understand and to follow if there is a living reference. For thousands of people all over the world he was an ideal translated into a simple human being. Read his story and you will be convinced that his teachings and his example shed a calm, gentle light on the face of troubled humanity.

Prabhupāda knew that the Western mind in its quest for empiricism displayed a naive, absolute faith in "realism," a faith akin to that of a child's attributing reality to fairy tales, quite forgetting that they are of his own making. Although this naiveté is considered a strength in Western cultures, it has proved to be a most fertile ground for human error and misunderstanding. Prabhupāda's Western followers are most painfully aware of this naiveté, and I believe that this awareness, fortified with Śrīla Prabhupāda's wisdom, has produced some of the truly great personalities of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the West.

sense perception. The words of Kṛṣṇa and the disciplic succession that carries the orders of Kṛṣṇa are actually authoritative. One must first become a pure devotee following the strict regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds daily, and when one thinks he is actually on the Vaiṣṇava platform, he must then take permission from the spiritual master, and that permission must also be confirmed by Kṛṣṇa from within his heart.

So to say the *Śrīla Prabhupāda līlāmṛta* is an authorized biography does not mean that it is a flattering portrait commissioned by an official body, but that it is an authorized literature presented by one who is serving the order of Kṛṣṇa and guru through the disciplic succession. As such, *Śrīla Prabhupāda līlāmṛta* is not written from the mundane or speculative viewpoint, nor can ordinary biographers comprehend the significance and meaning of the life of a pure devotee of God. Were such persons to objectively study the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the esoteric meanings would evade them. Were they to charitably try to praise Śrīla Prabhupāda, they would not know how. But because *Śrīla Prabhupāda līlāmṛta* is authorized through the transcendental process, it can transparently present the careful reader with a true picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Another important aspect of the authenticity of *Śrīla Prabhupāda līlāmṛta* is the vast amount of carefully researched information that I am able to focus into each volume. The leading devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, in addition to giving me permission to render this work, have also invited the world community of ISKCON devotees to help me in gathering detailed information about the life and person of Śrīla Prabhupāda. The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Prabhupāda's publishing house, has given me his collection of letters, totaling over seven thousand and scores of Prabhupāda's disciples have granted interviews and submitted diaries and memoirs of their association with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Aside from his disciples, we have interviewed many persons in various walks of life who met Śrīla Prabhupāda over the years. The result is that we have a rich, composite view of Śrīla Prabhupāda, drawn from many persons who knew him in many different situations and stages of his life. The Acknowledgments section in this book lists the persons who are cooperating to bring about *Śrīla Prabhupāda līlāmṛta*.

Despite the authorized nature of this book and despite the support of my many well-wishers, I must confess that in attempting to describe the glories of our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I am like a small bird trying to empty the ocean by

carrying drops of water to the land. The picture I have given of Śrīla Prabhupāda is only a glimpse into his unlimited mercy, and that glimpse has only been possible by the grace of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa.

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

But in this volume we see that the great contribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda was not just that he taught spiritual values, not just that he provided the answers to life's inevitable and ultimate questions, but that he inspired persons with the consciousness to *live* those spiritual values and to discover those answers for themselves. Prabhupāda's stature is awe-inspiring, and a consciousness radiated from him, steering many minds from material concerns to spiritual, helping them develop the inner strength to see that the "self" could become a far more potent force than the body.

In many parts of the world today men and women are seeking the consciousness Śrīla Prabhupāda inspired, and these followers believe that happiness and world peace can be achieved by the way of life Śrīla Prabhupāda taught. For these Kṛṣṇa conscious people, a new (though ancient) age is in the making. For them, a life of bliss, purity, responsibility, and civic service is no longer a dream belonging to an irreducible remote future, but is a vision almost within grasp.

Read the story of this simple and pure, almost godlike individual, and you will see how in certain hearts and minds a great apiritual vision is being actualized. These pages display the spiritual force that has changed the lives of thousands by making them reflect on their own inner behavior. Prabhupāda was here in this world to show us how to live. His words and deeds, as narrated on these pages, have the ability to make our souls joyous and free.

Shaligram Shukla
Professor of Linguistics
Georgetown University

Preface

After the disappearance of His Divine Grace A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada from this mortal world on November 14, 1977, many of his disciples saw a need for an authorized biography of Śrīla Prabhupada. The responsibility of commissioning such a work rested with the Governing Body Commission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. At their annual meeting in 1978, the GBC resolved that a biography of Śrīla Prabhupada should be written and that I would be the author.

According to the Vaiṣṇava tradition, if one aspires to write transcendental literature, he must first take permission from his spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. A good example of this is Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavīraja Gosvāmī, the author of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's authorized biography, *Śrī Caitanya caritāmṛta*. As Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavīraja has explained

In Vṛndāvana there were also many other great devotees, all of whom desired to hear the last pastimes of Lord Caitanya.

By their mercy, all these devotees ordered me to write of the last pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because of their order only, although I am shameless, I have attempted to write this *Caitanya caritāmṛta*.

Having received the order of the Vaiṣṇavas, but being anxious within my heart, I went back to the temple of Madana-mohana in Vṛndāvana to ask His permission also.

This transcendental process is further described by His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda in his commentary on the *Caitanya caritāmṛta* as follows:

To write about the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not an ordinary endeavor. Unless one is empowered by the higher authorities or advanced devotees, one cannot write transcendental literature, for all such literature must be above suspicion, or in other words, it must have none of the defects of the conditioned souls, namely mistakes, illusions, cheating and imperfect

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Introduction

The first chapter of this volume, spanning 1970 to 1975, is in itself a biographical synopsis of those years from the perspective of two major activities of Śrīla Prabhupāda: book production and book distribution. Meanwhile, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda was active in many other ways, and specifically he divided his time between America and India.

In America, where Śrīla Prabhupāda had the most disciples, the most temples, and the major front for his book distribution campaign, he toured and preached. Because his spiritual master had ordered him specifically to preach to the English speaking world, he had begun his movement in America; he wrote in English, and generally preferred to speak in English—even when in his own country before thousands of Indians.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching throughout America, especially in these later years, was mostly for the benefit of his disciples; he wanted to put the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement into their hands now that his movement in the U.S. had strength and maturity. This is your country, he would tell his disciples, and you know best how to preach here. But just to guide them and inspire them, he was lecturing, talking with reporters and university professors, purchasing properties, and simply being with his disciples as their leader, field commander, and worshipable master.

In India Śrīla Prabhupāda continued managing ISKCON on a practical, daily basis. Without his scrutiny in all manner of practical affairs—from financial to legal, from cleaning to cooking, from receiving guests to hiring construction workers—things would not be done properly; his disciples would be cheated, and ISKCON would not be appreciated as pure Vedic *dharma*. With great difficulty he had begun his three major ISKCON centers in India—Bombay, Vṛndāvana, and Mayapur—and he had laid a foundation of bold, ambitious plans. But that would not be sufficient. ISKCON in India had not yet developed to the point where Prabhupāda could say, as he had said to his disciples in America, "Now it is in your hands." Now it was in *his* hands. And to accomplish his goal, he assumed his feature of the exacting taskmaster, the relentlessly sharp-sighted temple manager.

That was his means. His end was to have his disciples actually take the management into their hands. But they would have to manage *his* way. As he would sometimes say to his leaders, "Do as I am doing." That lesson, once learned, would establish an ISKCON that would flourish even if he

relinquished the reins, an ISKCON that would survive even after his passing away.

But Prabhupāda's direct guidance was still required, and not only for showing his disciples how to manage ISKCON in India or how to preach in America, but also for protecting his Society from internal strife and schisms. And in this volume we see Śrīla Prabhupāda expertly unify ISKCON during a trial of divisive party spirit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's life followed rhythm: touring, preaching, and managing interspersed with periods of writing and translating. The two types of activities were not always compatible, however, since one was fast-paced and vigorously outgoing and the other intensely meditative. But both were necessary. In fact, one of Prabhupāda's goals in traveling throughout the world and painstakingly training his ISKCON leaders was to ultimately stop traveling, stop managing, and just sit in one place and write. But until such time, he was prepared to rise shortly after midnight wherever he was and write. Occasionally, however, he got a special opportunity, as in Hawaii in the summer of 1976, where for one month his ISKCON management stopped and his writing progressed at more than double the usual pace. But such quiet periods were the exception. As Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Not in this lifetime."

Still Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't begrudge his burden of touring and managing. He relished the struggle. In June of 1976, when his health was poor and his disciples pleaded with him to rest for several months, he was unmoved. And when they persisted, he affirmed, "I want the benediction to go on fighting for Kṛṣṇa—just like Arjuna."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's fighting, his writing, his traveling back and forth between two worlds—East and West—was for uniting both those worlds in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He saw himself as transplanting Vedic culture from East to West, an amazing feat in itself. But he was also reviving Vedic culture in India. His plan: to unite the East's Kṛṣṇa conscious culture with the West's prosperity and technological advancement, and thus benefit the entire world.

India, due to poverty, was lame; and America, due to spiritual ignorance, was blind. Alone they were incomplete. But if the two cooperated—the blind carrying the lame man on his shoulders, the blind guided by the lame—then both could progress happily.

Prabhupāda was also uniting two worlds in yet another way; he was uniting the material world with the spiritual. Some five hundred years before, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had enunciated the philosophy that the en-

ture material world, being an emanation from Lord Kṛṣṇa, is nondifferent from Him, and when the material world is linked with Kṛṣṇa in devotional service, it regains its spiritual nature Śrīla Prabhupāda fully embodied that principle, utilizing the latest technological achievements in transportation and communication, striving to spiritualize the entire material world As Śrīla Prabhupāda had written in his *Śrīmad Bhagavatam* purports,

Therefore, all the sages and devotees of the Lord have recommended that the subject matter of arts, science, philosophy, physics, chemistry, psychology and all other branches of knowledge should be wholly and solely applied in the service of the Lord Art, literature, poetry, painting etc., may be used in glorifying the Lord The fiction writers, poets, and celebrated literateurs are generally engaged in writing of sensuous subjects, but if they turn towards the service of the Lord they can describe the transcendental pastimes of the Lord Similarly, science and philosophy should also be applied in the service of the Lord Similarly, all other branches of knowledge should always be engaged in the service of the Lord

Śrīla Prabhupāda was specifically empowered to teach the entire world how, by linking everything with Kṛṣṇa through devotional service, they could enjoy the essence of the spiritual world even in this life This, Prabhupāda said, was "the one switch that will brighten everything, everywhere."

This final volume of the *Śrīla Prabhupāda līlāmṛta* also tells of Śrīla Prabhupāda's last year on earth, 1977 At the beginning of the year he heard news of a conspiracy against his movement in the West, the so called anticult movement He gave fearless direction to his devotees how to combat the bigotry, compared it to the attacks Kṛṣṇa Himself had to face from the *asuras*, and was pleased to hear of an important New York State court decision completely vindicating the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement from charges of "brainwashing"

The volume concludes with Śrīla Prabhupāda's final lessons, as he spent his last days in his Vṛndāvana residence Abstaining from food in his last months, he taught exemplary lessons in how a human being should ready himself to leave his body and return to the eternal spiritual world by always chanting and hearing about Lord Kṛṣṇa And by allowing his disciples to associate intimately with him in these last days, he taught final instructions in love, a love that endures beyond death

CHAPTER ONE

“Please Distribute Books”

San Francisco
July 5, 1970

Srila Prabhupada was attending the 1970 Ratha yatrā in San Francisco. The day was cold and windy, and about ten thousand people had joined Lord Jagannatha's procession through Golden Gate Park. Śrīla Prabhupāda had danced in the street with thousands of participants during the parade, addressed a large crowd in an auditorium by the beach, and looked on as his disciples had distributed a free vegetarian *prasadam* feast to thousands. But when a devotee arrived with a half dozen advance copies of Volume One of *Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Śrīla Prabhupada appeared especially pleased.

Surrounded by devotees and curious festival goers, Śrīla Prabhupada held one of the books, admiring the front cover, with its full color picture of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The volume was big, almost seven and a half by ten and a half inches, and its dust jacket shone, silver with large bright red letters “KṚṢṂA.” It was a transcendental wonder in Śrīla Prabhupada's reverent hands.

Onlookers could barely restrain themselves from pressing in against Śrīla Prabhupāda to peer over his shoulders. And they *didn't* restrain their exclamations when Prabhupāda smiled and opened the volume. He examined the illustrations, the print, the paper, and the binding. “Very nice,” he said. He fixed his attention on a page, reading. Then he looked up and announced that this greatly valuable book, *Kṛṣṇa*, had just arrived and that everyone should read it. Holding one book in his hand, with the other copies stacked before him, he said that anyone who so desired should come forward and buy a copy.

People began clamoring, and hands with ten-dollar bills thrust forward, while voices cried out, begging for a copy. And Prabhupāda promptly sold every book, not even keeping one for himself.

For the devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda's selling of the *Kṛṣṇa* book was the most spectacular event of the Ratha-yātrā festival. They pored over the purchased books in groups, discussing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and the effect they would have on the people of America.

Brahmānanda told how in 1967 Prabhupāda had given away his advance copy of *Teachings of Lord Chaitanya* in his room at 26 Second Avenue in New York City. Just before that book had arrived, Śrīla Prabhupāda had been sitting and talking with Satyavrata, a disciple who had previously stopped coming to the temple due to petty quarreling with his Godbrothers. When the copy of *Teachings of Lord Chaitanya* had arrived, Śrīla Prabhupāda had lovingly inspected it and had then offered it to Satyavrata as a gift.

Brahmānanda had been astounded to see Śrīla Prabhupāda give away his only copy of the book. Having helped publish the book, Brahmānanda knew how painstakingly Prabhupāda had written it and how he had anxiously waited one year for the book to finally see print. Yet once it had arrived, he had immediately given it away, and to a disciple who was not even in good standing. Satyavrata had taken the book, thanked Śrīla Prabhupāda, and left, never to be seen again.

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to be as eager to distribute Kṛṣṇa conscious literature as he was, none of them knew how to do it. Distributing a magazine and asking for a small donation was one thing—but a big, hardbound book? When the entire shipment of *Teachings of Lord Chaitanya* had arrived in New York in April of 1967, the devotees had hired a truck, picked up the books at the dock, and unloaded them at 26 Second Avenue. They had then shipped them to ISKCON centers in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Montreal, and elsewhere. And there they remained.

Some devotees had tried placing ads in magazines and leaving books in book stores on consignment. But the books didn't sell. How to sell these big, hardbound books remained a mystery—until something significant happened, an accidental discovery.

One day in 1971, while driving back to the temple after chanting in downtown San Francisco, two *brahmācārīs* stopped at a local service sta-

tion for gas. When the attendant came to the window for money, one of the devotees showed him a *Kṛṣṇa* book. The attendant seemed interested, and the two devotees began preaching the glories of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When they suggested he take the book as payment for the gas, he agreed.

Astonished at what had happened and inspired at their success, the two *brahmacārīs* went the next day with several *Kṛṣṇa* books and stood in front of a grocery store. And again it happened, this time they sold two books.

Kesava, the San Francisco temple president, phoned his GBC supervisor (and brother), Karandhara, in Los Angeles to tell him what had happened. "It's like a miracle!" Kesava exclaimed. Karandhara encouraged him to experiment further, and soon the San Francisco temple had half a dozen men going from door to door showing the books to people in their homes. When Buddhimanta began selling as many as five books in a day, the devotees in other temples, especially Los Angeles, San Diego, and Denver, wanted to follow his example. And whoever tried it and sold a book became caught up in a euphoric excitement.

The experience and testimonies of devotees selling Śrīla Prabhupada's books describe a special taste, distinct from the happiness young men might ordinarily experience by stumbling upon a sales technique and finding themselves on the verge of making a lot of money. The difference is that the devotees' book distribution, being devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, produces an ecstasy that is transcendental, an ecstasy far beyond even the greatest material happiness.

Ordinary business and the business of selling Kṛṣṇa conscious literature are as different as material life from spiritual life. And anyone observing spiritual life from the material point of view will not understand it. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has compared such empirical attempts to understand the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with attempts to taste honey by licking the outside of the bottle.

The young men and women beginning to distribute books in America knew that Śrīla Prabhupāda, by giving them Kṛṣṇa consciousness, had saved them from hellish life, and they wanted to help him give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. And such preaching, by distributing his books, was ecstasy, spiritual ecstasy.

By mid 1971, the temples were selling hundreds of *Kṛṣṇa* books a week. Karandhara, Prabhupāda's Book Fund manager, began sending *sankīrtana*

newsletters to the North American temples and to Śrīla Prabhupāda. By listing the monthly results of each temple's book distribution, the newsletters incited competition. Karandhara's December 1971 newsletter summed up the mood of the year and urged the devotees to increase.

Recently, in an all out program to sell books, the San Francisco Temple has been averaging 20 Krishna Books per day distribution. What is their technique? Keshava Prabhu says, "Simply we make it our priority activity. All you have to do is want to do it and then try as hard as you can. Everywhere we go, we carry BTGs and Krishna books," he says, "on street SKP, door to door, in the laundromat, in the store, everywhere." We have been taxiing our brains in so many fancy and complicated ways to try to increase sales, but as it has been experienced, nothing is more successful than simply taking the books personally in hand and going door to door with this Causeless Mercy. Just consider, how many hours a day do we spend specifically trying to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's literature, which is the dearest thing to him?

The crowning touch to end the year's *saṅkīrtana*, however, came not from the newsletter but from Prabhupāda himself, who wrote to Keshava, the "king" of Kṛṣṇa book distribution,

I have been receiving so many reports about how my disciples from the San Francisco Temple cannot be surpassed by anyone in distributing my books. Sometimes they are selling as many as 70 Krishna books daily. So if this is true, then certainly when I return to the U.S. I must come and stay in your Temple. By distributing my books profusely you are giving me great encouragement to translate. And you are all helping me to fulfill the order which Guru Maharaj gave me. So I am so much grateful to you, and I am sure Krishna will bless you a million times over for doing this work.

I hope that you and all my beloved disciples in San Francisco Temple are in strong health and jolly mood

Copies of this letter went out to every ISKCON center. Prabhupāda had always given his blessings to all the devotees, but never before could anyone recall his saying a devotee would get Kṛṣṇa's blessings "a million times over"!

Although a letter from Prabhupāda usually instructed a specific devotee, the instruction often had universal application; and Śrīla Prabhupāda's

letters made clear his disciples' top priority book distribution

I am very pleased to hear that you are increasing in your distribution of our books and magazines. This is a good sign that your preaching work is also strong. The more you increase your strength in preaching, the more you will go on selling books. I want especially that my books be distributed widely.

Prabhupada's ambition was to replace mundane literature with transcendental. At least in every home there should be one piece of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature, he reasoned, because if a person read only one page, his life could be turned toward perfection. "If one percent of the readers become devotees," he wrote, "that will change the world." Whereas mail order advertisers were satisfied with a five percent response, Śrīla Prabhupada spoke of an even smaller percentage—one percent—whom he thought could become pure devotees in response to receiving a book. Lord Kṛṣṇa also confirms this in *Bhagavad gītā*. "Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth." To make the world Kṛṣṇa conscious, therefore, would require that millions of pieces of transcendental literature be distributed.

Śrīla Prabhupada wanted his disciples to understand *why* they should distribute his books, and he instructed them through his letters:

Who God is can be summed up in only five words—Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller. If you become convinced of this and preach it enthusiastically, success is assured, and you will be doing the greatest service for all living entities.

He wrote to Jayādvaita,

These books and magazines are our most important propaganda weapons to defeat the ignorance of *maya*'s army, and the more we produce such literature and sell them profusely all over the world, the more we shall deliver the world from the suicide course.

To Jagadīśa he wrote,

I am encouraged to see your report of books sold because it proves that you consider it your responsibility to see that more and more

people are reading our literature. Actually, this is the solid basis for our preaching work—no other movement has got such profuse authority for preaching. And if someone reads our Krishna conscious philosophy, he becomes convinced

Prabhupāda continued to insist that all major Kṛṣṇa conscious programs be maintained, including Deity worship, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in public, and holding outside lectures. All programs were important. But book distribution, whenever possible, should accompany the other programs. To a *sannyāsi* whose main program was public lecturing, Prabhupāda wrote,

Distribute books, as many as possible. If anyone hears some philosophy from us, that will help him. But if he purchases one book, that may turn his life. So selling books is the best preaching activity. Sell books, hold the kīrtan in public places like schools and colleges, preach.

And in a letter to Bhagavān dāsa in France, he stressed the same thing: "What will your three minutes preaching do? But if they buy one book, it may turn their life."

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During this period of increasing book distribution, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's newly initiated *sannyāsis* concocted the idea that the devotees should spend much more time studying. While visiting the New York temple, this *sannyāsi* openly advocated that devotees read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books five to eight hours daily. The temple was following a new schedule Śrīla Prabhupāda had set up, with devotees attending the morning program, going out all day for street chanting and book distribution, and returning in the evening for a class on *Bhagavad gītā*. But now controversy arose, and an urgent phone call was placed to Śrīla Prabhupāda in Los Angeles. When Prabhupāda heard the details from his secretary, he immediately responded

My reply is that this sankīrtan or street chanting must go on, it is our most important program. Lord Chaitanya's movement means the sankīrtan movement. You may simply take two hours for chanting sixteen rounds daily, two hours for reading congregationally, and balance of time go out for sankīrtan. We must do both, reading books and

distributing books, but distributing books is the main propaganda. Reading in class for two hours is sufficient, and other reading can be done in spare time if one has got it. It is not that one has to be always reading. One hour a morning for Bhagavata class and one hour evening, either Bhagavad-gita or Nectar of Devotion, that is sufficient.

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January 1972

"You should always think of new outlets for distributing my books," Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Jagadīśa. And new outlets the devotees found—shopping centers, malls, parking lots. They were meeting more people than ever before.

By entering the malls and shopping centers, the devotees plunged into the heart of American society, meeting pious and impious, rich and poor, black and white. Book-selling was still difficult, but the devotees persevered, carrying their heavy book bags and distributing the literature they knew could solve all problems.

The devotees saw the shoppers as so many walking victims of the material energy, people living for sensual and mental pleasure and therefore doomed to an inauspicious death. Any serious devotee could philosophically explain from *Bhagavad-gītā* the predicament of the materialist, but now they were directly witnessing this plight. And by Prabhupāda's mercy, they were working hard to deliver the missing essence of transcendental knowledge to the bewildered souls.

Then came the discovery of traveling from town to town to sell books. Some of the *brahmacārīs* in Los Angeles had been feeling that by staying in the temple they were wasting time they could be using for book distribution. So they loaded a van with Kṛṣṇa books and went to areas where they could camp for a week, live a simpler life, and distribute books as many hours a day as they liked. This "traveling *saṅkīrtana*" produced another significant increase by creating an environment wherein the men could become fully absorbed in their work. The new program spread quickly throughout the ISKCON world, and Śrīla Prabhupāda liked it.

I am very glad to hear from you the wonderful news of traveling party in England. I think the people of that place are becoming more and more inclined for this Krishna Consciousness movement. They are inviting you to stay at their houses, they are taking books, becoming sometimes devotees—all of these are very encouraging signs to me.

Simply go on in this way, stopping in every village and city in England, Scotland, or if there are other places, like Ireland. Simply stop for some time, distribute books and hold Sankirtan procession, answer their questions, give some leaflets or small informations freely, distribute prasadam wherever possible, at least some small thing, and if there is some genuine interest being shown, then request the townspeople to arrange some engagements for speaking in their schools or in someone's home or a hall, like that. In this way remain always without anxiety for destination and comfortable situations, always relying only on the mercy of Krishna for your plan. Just go on preaching His message and selling His books wherever there is interest. We shall not waste time if there is no interest or if people are unfriendly; there are so many places to go.

Śrīla Prabhupāda began saying that opening new centers was less important now that the traveling parties were combing the country. When he heard that the temple president in Vancouver had acquired a bus for traveling, he wrote,

I think we are becoming like a gigantic guerilla warfare movement fighting with maya. This traveling in buses is the best means to drive away maya and establish Krishna Consciousness all over the world.

Prabhupāda was glad to hear that temple presidents and zonal leaders were also going out with the traveling *sankīrtana* parties. The Vedic concept of the commander, he said, is that he must fight in the front lines, not sit behind the scenes, sheltered. Having already witnessed how some of his leading disciples had become bogged down by managing many things, he advised them all to travel and preach, distributing literature wherever they went.

Practically, this ISKCON organization is there because I have been always traveling. I never sat down in my old age, no. So you follow my example and preach widely all over the world. That is Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's version.

When a devotee in California wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda for permission to give up married life and go on traveling *sankīrtana*, Prabhupāda replied that to give up family life was not necessary. Lord Caitanya had taught

that being a *sannyāsī* or a *gṛhastha* did not matter as long as one fully served Kṛṣṇa. A householder could also sometimes travel and distribute books, with or without his wife.

Near the end of 1972, the BBT newsletter, now compiled by Karandhara's assistant, Rāmeśvara, reported the ever-increasing results of book distribution.

Book Distribution continues soaring to all-time highs, as more than 25 Traveling SKP Parties roam the countryside, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of conditioned souls! Since mid-September we have distributed over 15,000 complete KRSNA TRILOGY SETS! And since mid-August we have distributed over 9,000 SOFT BHAGAVAD GITAS and over 950 HARD BHAGAVAD GITAS! Macmillan too has completely sold out (20,000 GITAS sold commercially) and is reprinting large quantities for the Christmas rush!

Another breakthrough for book distribution came at the end of 1972. The previous year devotees had taken advantage of the Christmas season by selling the Kṛṣṇa book door to door, but no one had been aware just how significant the Christmas season could actually be.

Rāmeśvara: *It was on December 22, 1972, that we occidentally discovered the Christmas marathon in Los Angeles. Of course, we noticed a great increase in the number of people going into the stores, and the stores were staying open sometimes until midnight. I was standing in front of a Burbank Zody's. We were having an intense competition with prizes in Los Angeles, and it was building up to a feverish pitch.*

So after distributing madly all day long, I had collected about \$350 and had distributed 650 magazines. It was about ten o'clock at night. I was convinced this was the new world's record in ISKCON and that nobody was possibly going to beat me this day. Even though the store was open until twelve, business had started slowing off, and I was thinking, "Maybe I should go back. Undoubtedly everyone is back already. No one has ever stayed out past eight o'clock. They'll all be waiting up for me. I shouldn't keep them waiting up." So in this way my mind was convincing me to go back.

By eleven o'clock the store was completely dead. I got in the car and started driving back. On the way back I passed another Zody's, called Hollywood Zody's, on Sunset and Western. I was torn whether to stop or not, because that store was crowded and was going to be open until

midnight. But I decided, "No, I'll go back, because the other devotees will be waiting up to see how many books I distributed." So I just kept driving.

I finally arrived at the temple at about ten minutes to twelve, and I burst into the sankīrtana room. But the only person there was the secretary, Madhukanṭha. I said, "Oh, no. Everyone went to bed?" He said, "No, nobody is back yet." I was the first one back! That was the discovery of the first Christmas marathon. It was completely unplanned. No one had ever instructed anyone to stay out that late. We just did it spontaneously.

Finally, at about one-thirty in the morning, all the devotees had returned, and we were all sitting around looking at the saṅkīrtana mop. We couldn't sleep, we were so excited to go out. We were thinking, "Where can we find plenty of conditioned souls to distribute books to?" Our noise and raucous laughter was like a drunken party, and it woke up Korondhara, who was sleeping in his office in the next room. He came stumbling in, wiping the sleep from his eyes, but when he saw us and saw what was going on, he burst out laughing and sent us all to bed, saying, "Get ready for tomorrow." So in this way we performed the three-day marathon—December 22, 23, and 24.

No one had ever distributed as many books before in the history of our movement. A big day had been considered to be somewhere between twenty-five and forty books. But we were distributing between five thousand and six thousand pieces of literature a day for a three-day period. One temple had distributed almost eighteen thousand pieces of literature in just three days.

At this time Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Bombay, where his attempt to secure the land in Juhu had become entangling. The landlord was now refusing to sell the property and was trying to evict the devotees, even though Śrīla Prabhupāda had already installed Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities on the land. Although these matters were causing Śrīla Prabhupāda anxiety, he continued his usual daily duties: taking his morning walk, lecturing in the evening from *The Nectar of Devotion*, corresponding with and receiving news from his centers around the world, even organizing a Bombay *pandal* festival for January.

When Prabhupāda received news of the book distribution in Los Angeles and elsewhere in the United States, he was very pleased and amazed. Although involved with many affairs from throughout the world, he put them aside and relished the overwhelming victory of book distribution.

in America. Immediately he called in his personal secretary and dictated letters.

My dear Ramesvar,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated December 27, 1972, and with great happiness I have read your figures of amount of books sold during three-day period, December 22–24, 1972. It is scarcely believable that more than 17,000 books could have been sold by one temple in three days! That indicates to me that people are at last becoming little serious about this Krishna Consciousness movement in your country. Otherwise, why they should buy our books? But they can see that our boys and girls, devotees, are so much sincere and serious to distribute the message of Krishna Consciousness, they are at once struck by seeing them, and therefore they appreciate and purchase. This is unique in the world. So I am so much pleased upon all of the boys and girls in Los Angeles and all over the world who are understanding and appreciating this unique quality of our transcendental literature, and voluntarily they are going out to distribute despite all circumstances of difficulty. By this effort alone they are assured to go back to home, back to Godhead.

The same day Prabhupāda dictated a letter to Karandhara.

I could never have thought it was possible to distribute so many of our literatures. Therefore I can understand it is simply Krishna's blessing us for your sincerely working on His behalf. Actually, that is the secret of my success, not that personally I have done anything wonderful, but that because those who are helping me are sincere. They have done the work. That is the reason for our success all over the world where others have failed. A little sincerity is very difficult thing in this age of hypocrisy and bluff, but I am so fortunate that Krishna has sent me all of you nice boys and girls who are sincerely working. Please convey to all of them my deepest appreciation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters acknowledging the Christmas marathon and assuring the devotees that they would go back to Godhead sent the book distribution movement flying into the new year with great momentum. Devotees continued to find new ways and places to distribute books. New records were constantly topping the old, and the devotees were making still higher projections for the future.

Rāmeśvara published in his February 1973 newsletter a letter from a college student who had read one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. ISKCON's mail-order office was receiving hundreds of such letters a month.

Sir:

A couple of weeks ago, devotees of Krishna (from Denver, I understand) were here at the University of Arkansas distributing literature. One young man approached me with a "hard pitch" for my purchasing a copy of the Prabbupada translation of the Bhagavad-gita; I was initially quite skeptical (so many people are getting rich from selling their versions of "the answer") and told him to not bother me. He insisted, though, and I finally gave in.

I have been reading the Gita, having not finished it yet, and have found it quite rewarding; my mind, shaped in logic and empiricism, seems to find itself barely tasting the transcendental material in the book; I discuss it with others; I find myself remembering certain passages. . . .

It has genuinely stimulated my interest, to say the least, in a way that my quite extensive readings in Christianity, Zen Buddhism, the "lower" forms of yoga, etc. have never succeeded in doing.

In short, I think I have finally found the beginning.

Rāmeśvara went on to beat the drum of *saṅkīrtana*.

Actually no one can properly measure the effect of our book distribution. If it was known how many books we distribute each month we would be listed on every best-seller list in the country! For example, as many of you know, already the new GITA has outsold any other edition of the GITA ever printed. The Macmillan Company has already sold tens of thousands of copies, while we have sold over 27,000 copies ourselves since they first appeared last August.

With increased monies coming into the Book Fund, Śrīla Prabhupāda had approved his trustees' plans to print larger quantities of books and store them in a warehouse, making them available to the temples for distribution throughout the year. Yet keeping up with the temples' demand for books was still difficult, even with a warehouse.

Small, easy-to-sell books like *Beyond Birth and Death*, *On the Way to Kṛṣṇa*, *Rāja-vidyā*, and *The Perfection of Yoga* were printed in the tens of thousands. Distributors would go out, carrying in their book bags a variety of books: *Śrī Isopaniṣad*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and

Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead, as well as an assortment of small books, *Back to Godhead* magazines, and some inexpensive booklets like *Kṛṣṇa, The Reservoir of Pleasure* and *On Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa*.

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Tom Beaudry was living with his wife in Santa Cruz, California. After attending a festival in Berkeley celebrating Lord Caitanya's appearance, where he chanted all day, and after reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā*, he felt he should become Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciple. He began chanting and trying to interest his wife and friends in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When a traveling party of *brahmacārīs* arrived to start a center in Santa Cruz, he told them he wanted to join. But they were skeptical. Then one day he showed up with a shaved head and *dhottī*.

Tom Beaudry: *I began going out every day with the chanting party. Then gradually I began to break away from the kīrtana party to sell small books in shopping centers. One day I came back and one of the brahmacārīs, Sarvabhauma, criticized me. He asked me how many big books I had sold. I said, "I didn't sell any." He said, "How many did you bring with you?" I said, "I didn't have any to bring with me." "Then you're in māyā," he said. "You didn't bring any big books? How do you expect to sell them? Prabhupāda wants these big books sold." So I thought to myself, "Gee, I must be in māyā." I said, "How do you sell these books?" He said, "You pray to Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda gives you the mercy." So I thought, "Well, that makes sense. That's how everything works in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."*

I went to my house. I thought about it and prayed to Prabhupāda that I could sell these big books. I prayed all evening and then took rest. In the morning I got up, and it was on my mind. So I put out one big book, Teachings of Lord Chaitanya, in my bag of small books. But in the course of selling the small books, I forgot about the big book.

Suddenly a lady came up to me and said, "What is that big book you have there?" Then I remembered Prabhupāda and my prayers, and I said, "This is the Teachings of Lord Chaitanya." I gave her the book, and she gave me three dollars. When I got back to the temple, I told the devotees how Prabhupāda had sold a book.

Praghoṣa: I was coming regularly to the Detroit temple for classes in the evening, and I was doing some odd work to help the devotees prepare the temple. Every night I would be painting, and I would watch the devotees

coming back from sankīrtana. They seemed very ecstatic and enlivened, and I was always a little curious about what they did out there that made them come back like this. I would be up on my ladder, painting and listening to them talk as they sat on the floor drinking hot milk. They would talk about how they had knocked an one man's door and this had happened and then that had happened—it was very attractive to me.

After I moved into the temple and had been a devotee about a week, someone asked me if I would like to go out and try distributing books. So I went out, wearing a dhoti and tilaka and using a straightforward presentation, walking up to people, giving them a card and a book, telling them about the contents of the book, showing them Prabhupāda's picture, and asking for a donation. The exhilaration I got from that was just incredible. It became extremely blissful to go out and do this. None of us could actually put a finger on why it was so ecstatic.

We used to lie awake at night. All the brahmachārīs stayed in one big room, and we would lie there on the floor in our sleeping bags, whispering to each other: "What did you say to the people out there?" There would be all these different conversations going on in the room at night, with the lights out and everyone talking, trying to relate how we were presenting Prabhupāda's books.

Jagaddhātri-devī dāsi: My first service was cleaning the temple. I was cleaning the whole temple. I would be looking out the window at the men piling into the vans getting ready for sankīrtana, and I would always think that I would really like to be doing that. Finally our temple formed two traveling parties, one of men and one of women, and we went for the summer to distribute books in the fairs of Washington state. The men and the ladies used to have competition to see who could distribute the most.

Sura: I joined Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Seattle in 1973, and they sent me out on book distribution my first day. We would always hear from Los Angeles about the letters Prabhupāda was sending. Everything we heard was centered on Prabhupāda's desire for his books to be distributed. It was by hearing this that newer devotees wanted to go out and be part of the sankīrtana party. We wanted to be soldiers for Prabhupāda's book distribution army.

We went to the Spokane Fair, and the leader of the Spokane temple wrote a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda requesting him to come and telling him the results of our book distribution. Then we received a reply from Prabhupāda saying that he couldn't make it but that the devotees should go to the fair and preach on his behalf. "Fulfill my mission," Prabhupāda



Srila Prabhupada tours the new offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in Los Angeles June 1975



Srila Prabhupada with members of the Rādhā Dāmodara bus party in Chicago July 1975



Above Śrīla Prabhupada arriving
at Philadelphia International Airport
(July 11 1975) Left Speaking in
his room in Philadelphia July 1975

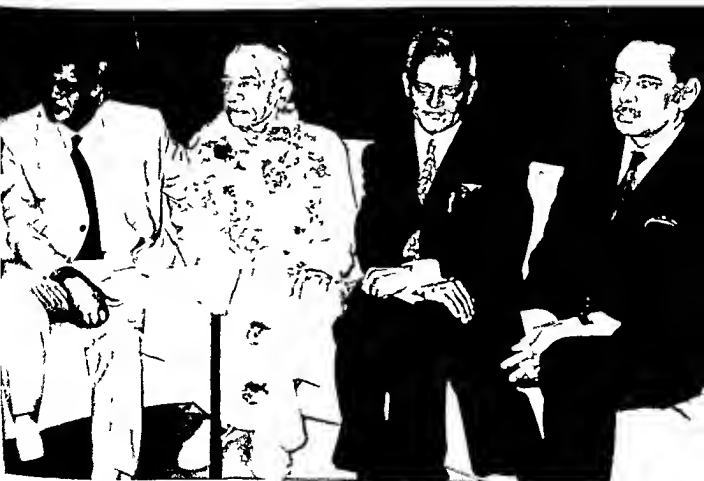
Right Śrīla Prabhupāda s
lval at the Dallas Fort Worth
a rport July 28 1975
ow: Śrīla Prabhupāda rece ves
om left to right) Sushil Muni
Yogi Bhajan and Swami
idananda, Berkeley July 1975

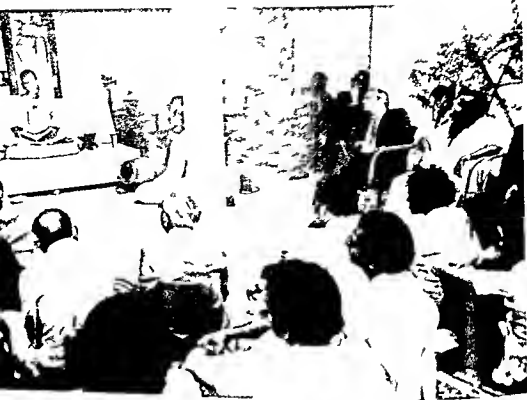




Above Śrīla Prabhupāda with
the students and staff of the
Dallas Gurukula. Left
N tyānanda dāsa (motoring)
takes Śrīla Prabhupāda on a
tour of New Talavan
ISKCON's farm in
M ss ss ppi (August 1 1975)

Right Śrīla
Prabhupada and his
disciples outside the
Krishna Balaram
Mandir in Vrndavana
India August 1975
Below Śrīla
Prabhupada speaks
with guests during
his tour of Africa
October 1975



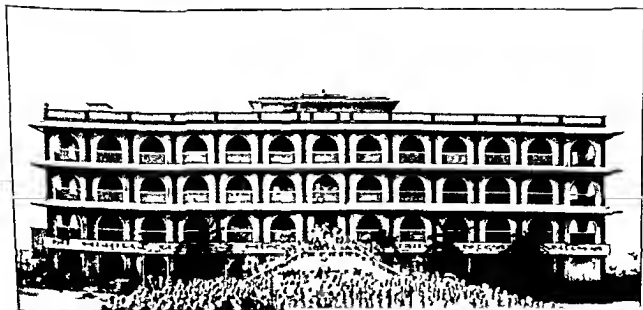


Above and below Śrīla Prabhupada in Africa October 1975





Above Śrīla Prabhupada walks with his leading disciples in Mayapur West Bengal, March 1976 Left On the roof of the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir Below Devotees surround Śrīla Prabhupada outside the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir during the annual Gaura Purnima festival





Above: Śrīla Prabhupada
arriving in Los Angeles, June
1976 Left Chanting Hare
Kṛṣṇa on his beads in his room
in Los Angeles



Above: Śrīla Prabhupāda translates in the early-morning hours Left Śrīla Prabhupāda talks with Stillson Judah on Venice Beach in Los Angeles during a morning walk Below Passing out cookies in the Los Angeles temple.





Left Śrīla Prabhupāda in his garden in Los Angeles. Below Śrīla Prabhupada singing bhajanas in the Los Angeles recording studio.



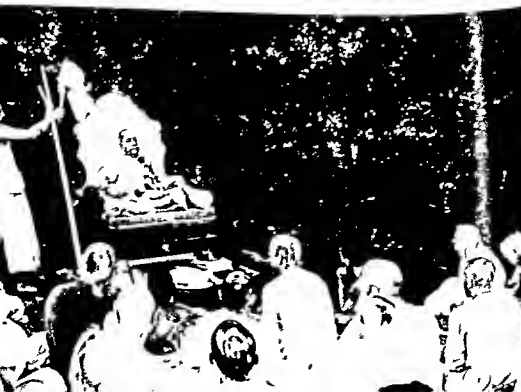


Above Śrīla Prabhupada is amused amid the technological array of his tape ministry Below Śrīla Prabhupada examines the newly published Fifth Canto of the *Srīmad Bhagavatam*



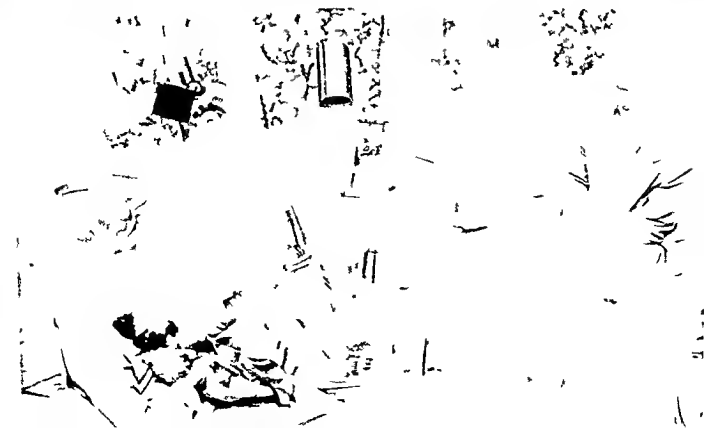


Above Śrīla Prabhupāda meets with George Gullen, President of Wayne State University in Detroit, June 1976. Below Śrīla Prabhupāda speaks to a gathering of devotees in New Vrindaban, June 1976.





Above Śrīla Prabhupada on the roof of the Hare Krishna center in Manhattan during his last visit to New York July 1976 Below Talking with reporters in his room in New York City





Above Śrīla Prabhupāda
tours the ISKCON farm in
France July 1976 Right
Śrīla Prabhupāda at the
farm in Hyderabad
December 1976





Above left Śrīla Prabhupada at the Kumbha Mela January 1977 Above right Traveling by train in India
Below Śrīla Prabhupada views the photo display at the Gaura Purnima festival in Mayapur in 1977





International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Above The last Bombay
pandal April 1977 Right
Sri la Prabhupada in the
courtyard of the Krishna
Balaram Mandir during
the summer of 1977



said, "that every man and woman in the United States gets a book"

That was just what we were waiting for—to get an order directly from Śrīla Prabhupāda that this was what pleases him. Our book distribution kept increasing, and we just thought we'd never had so much fun before. It wasn't like austerity. Some of the devotees were thinking, "Well, it's really hard to go on sankīrtana." We were thinking, "You must be nuts! It's the most fun thing you can do to go on sankīrtana and sell books." It was fun, not for sense gratification but for the soul, because of our being linked in service to our spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. I appreciated it in that way. And when I first met Praghosa, I could see he was really dedicated and a true lover of Prabhupāda, because he was so dedicated to pleasing Prabhupāda by distributing books.

Praghosa. We were distributing in Santa Barbara, California. The area had been worked many times before, and the people were really puffed up. I went there with a couple of brahmachārīs. One day, after trying to distribute for about seven hours, I had only sold one book. I had never before had anything like that happen to me in my whole time as a devotee. I was really working. I never stopped. At one particular point I just couldn't take it any more. I tried to give a book to someone, and they just cracked off to me in a really obnoxious way. I had so much desire, I was trying so hard, that when he did this it just devastated me. I just wanted to punch the guy in the nose. All my intensity came out, and I erupted into tears. I just sat down on an old telephone pole that was lying by the street and started to cry.

Then this devotee walked up and found me sitting there like I had just lost my best friend. He said, "Prabhu, what's the matter?" I said, "I don't know what's the matter. I just can't distribute books. Not one person will take a book. I've been out here for seven hours. Do you know how many books I've distributed? One book." Then he sat down and preached to me and put me back together.

The next day I was really trying to have a better day, and I took my book bag and just ran from one person to another all morning. Then I was showing a book to a girl, and she said she couldn't pay me with money but that she would gladly pay me. I was young and naive, and I didn't know exactly what she was talking about for a minute. Then finally when I realized, I called, "Hare Kṛṣṇa!" and took the book back from her, took off my wig, and just bolted to another parking lot. I ran from person to person all day, praying real hard to Kṛṣṇa. By the end of the day I had distributed a large number of books.

Lavanga latikā devī dāśī When I first came to Los Angeles, Śrīmatī told me that Śrīla Prabhupada had said that being in the temple all the time was *māyā*. Prabhupada wanted us to go out and distribute BTGs door to door. I learned from the other devotees how to distribute books. There were so many experienced devotees who knew how, so I just followed in their footsteps. I would say what they'd say and do what they'd do. Then it became easy. When a person took a book and gave a donation, I could see it was Lord Caitanya acting. I could see that everything was working under the direction of Kṛṣṇa's internal energy.

Tom Beaudry had moved from Santa Cruz to Los Angeles, and by associating with devotees like Rāmesvara and other book distributors, he soon became a leader. He was initiated in June 1972 and received the name Tripurārī dāśa. Every day he would go to a supermarket parking lot near the temple and sell a couple hundred copies of *Easy Journey to Other Planets*. One evening at the University of California at Long Beach, he and a few other book distributors dropped in on a lecture given by a popular yoga leader.

Rāmesvara. I remember when they came back. It was the middle of Bhagavad gītā class and I was giving the class in the temple room. All of a sudden the door burst open and they were standing there. Tripurārī was in his street clothes and the girls were in their sārīs. They just ran into the temple. You could see that something very special had taken place, because their faces were glowing. They couldn't even speak. They were dazed or stunned. The whole temple was anxious to hear the news, so I quickly finished the class. Then Tripurārī told us that he had just distributed seventeen Bhagavad gītās—the full, hardbound unabridged Bhagavad gītās—in two hours. Līlāsaktī had distributed thirteen, Vṇḍāvana had distributed eleven. Tīlaka had distributed eleven and before. We were all completely astonished that anyone could sell so many big books like that.

One morning a few days later, Tripurārī was driving down the San Diego Freeway to go on traveling *sankīrtana* when he saw the sign for the Los Angeles airport and spontaneously decided to try it. After selling a dozen big books that day he realized the airport was wonderful for book distribution. He started going out regularly to the airport and was soon distributing

thirty to forty books a day, sometimes giving individuals as many as six volumes of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* at once.

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April 11, 1973

Śrīla Prabhupāda flew from New York to Los Angeles, and a crowd of loving devotees greeted him

Tripurārī Prabhupāda was arriving at two in the afternoon, and all the devotees were going to meet him. But it was also Easter weekend and a big day for book distribution at the airport. At that time I was the only one working the airport. I was doing rather well and had sold about thirty books by one thirty. Then I changed into my dhotī and walked over to the arrivals area to meet His Divine Grace. When he entered the terminal building, he looked at me and smiled, and I melted in ecstasy.

We had kīrtana all the way down the stairs, and when we got outside, all the devotees were going back to the temple. Then I thought, "What business do I have going back to the temple and chanting with all the devotees? My business is to stay out and distribute the books. That is my service to Prabhupāda." So I was the only one who didn't return to the temple. I stayed and distributed sixty-seven books. When I got back, I found that Karandhara had told Prabhupāda about me and how I had been distributing books. When I heard that, I became very enthusiastic and continued to distribute books every day that week.

In Los Angeles Śrīla Prabhupāda took his morning walks either at the shore of the Pacific Ocean or in Cheviot Hills Park. Every morning a few disciples would join him, as well as Thoudam Singh, a Ph.D. candidate in organic chemistry at the University of California. Śrīla Prabhupāda would regularly discuss with Dr. Singh the scientific theory of life's originating from matter. Day after day, Prabhupāda would expose Darwin's theory as foolish and unscientific.

The sun would just be appearing on the horizon as Prabhupāda and a small group of disciples walked. The air would be chilly, and Śrīla Prabhupāda would wear his hooded saffron overcoat, while his disciples, wearing sweaters or wool *cāḍars*, followed him, listening and asking questions.

Most of the conversation, however, would be between Prabhupāda and Dr. Singh, who played the role of a materialistic scientist. Dr. Singh would present atheistic arguments, and Śrīla Prabhupāda would defeat them with scripture and logic. "I say to the scientists," Prabhupāda said, "if life originated from chemicals, and if your science is so advanced, then why can't you create life biochemically in your laboratories?"

On one of these morning walks, the older devotees introduced Rāmeśvara to Prabhupāda, and at the devotees' request, Rāmeśvara began telling Śrīla Prabhupāda about book distribution. He mentioned that sometimes the distributors would meet impersonalists and convince them to buy a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped and turned gravely to Rāmeśvara. "What do you say to them?" he asked.

Rāmeśvara told Prabhupāda some of his techniques for selling a book.

After a few moments Prabhupāda said, "Our men need to study our books also."

On the morning Tripurāri accompanied Prabhupāda on his walk, Prabhupāda said little as they walked up and down the beach. Only when they were walking back toward the car did one of the devotees mention, "Prabhupāda, Tripurāri is here."

Prabhupāda turned and smiled. "Ah. How is the book distribution going?" he asked.

This was Tripurāri's first time to speak directly with his spiritual master, and he wanted to say many things at once. In nervous enthusiasm he began blurting out his realizations. Prabhupāda interrupted, "This is the best service for humanity." And he quoted from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "There will never be a devotee more dear to Me than he who preaches this message."

With the exception of Rāmeśvara's and Tripurāri's brief encounters with Prabhupāda, none of the book distributors in Los Angeles had any personal exchanges or meetings with their spiritual master. But the closeness of their relationship with him was not dependent on physical proximity.

Tripurāri: *My association with Śrīla Prabhupāda was always more or less in separation and in the field. While many of the older devotees were trained personally by Prabhupāda, I never got that training. I was trained by Śrīla Prabhupāda more from within my own heart. I think that's the case with all of our book distributors. They have a very intimate sense of feeling for Prabhupāda, but they never had much personal contact. Their intimacy and real sense of knowing Prabhupāda very closely was*

because of that service which Prabhupāda said was his life and soul—seeing that the books went out.

Śrīla Prabhupāda liked to sit in his garden, with its roses, jasmine, azaleas, honeysuckle, mint, silver lace vine, marigolds, and banana trees, and he liked the sound of the fountain. The small compound, with its lawn, flowers, bushes, and seat for Śrīla Prabhupāda, was surrounded by high cinder-block walls. When Prabhupāda received special guests, the devotees would bring chairs for them, but Prabhupāda's disciples would always sit on thin mats on the lawn and look up at Śrīla Prabhupāda on his elevated seat. The neighborhood was quieter and more peaceful in the evening, and Prabhupāda could hear the *kīrtana* in the temple and the cars passing along Venice Boulevard. Men's shouts from the nearby karate school were a disturbance Prabhupāda had come to tolerate.

For an hour or more Prabhupāda would sit, listening to a reading from *Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, while around him on the grass, sharing the transcendental moment, sat his disciples. Prabhupāda was fully satisfied to hear Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, and he would sit erect, head held high, in a meditative mood. It was only an informal group, but his presence made the occasion very special, momentous. From time to time he would interrupt the reader to comment. Night would fall, and he would end the reading and leave the garden, walking on the gravel path past the main temple building and up to his second floor suite.

Śrīla Prabhupāda so much liked his Los Angeles garden that he decided he wanted one like it at his Māyāpur headquarters.

With regard to the Mayapur house, I may suggest you make one roof garden. On the top of the house you can put soil of six inches and then plant so many tulasi plants and nice bushes. I like the garden very much. Just like here in Los Angeles temple they have made one very nice garden for me and I sit there every evening. So you please also make a first-class Mayapur garden.

At about ten in the evening Śrīla Prabhupāda would usually go into his bedroom and lie down. His servant, Śrutakṛti, would massage his legs, and Prabhupāda would then close his eyes. Meanwhile, Rāmeśvara would be waiting at the bottom of the stairs, hoping that the secretary or servant would come down with a message from Prabhupāda.

Rāmeśvara: *I was too afraid to go into Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, so I would be waiting at the bottom of the stairs, just hanging there, just waiting for one word. Śrīla Prabhupāda would often say something, and it would be passed to me. Then every morning the sankīrtana devotees would just surround me and ask, "What did he say?" They would be begging for some nectar. It was an intense experience. We felt that we were all having a special direct connection with Prabhupāda.*

While waiting outside Prabhupāda's door, I would be in transcendental bliss just thinking how we were distributing books as an offering of pure love for our spiritual master. This was the first time that devotees were going to the airports. No one else in the movement was going to an airport except the devotees in Los Angeles, so it was something very special. No one was doing big books in the quantity that we were.

At one point, when Śrīla Prabhupāda saw one of my daily sankīrtana reports, he commented, "What is Rāmeśvara?"

Day after day, Śrīla Prabhupāda was seeing these ecstatic reports, sprinkled with nectarean quotes from his Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā chapter that had just been published. He realized that these disciples were in ecstasy, and so he asked, "What are they?" He could see we loved sankīrtana. It was not an artificial burden or that we were struggling. He could see that there didn't seem to be any struggle. It was like fun, bliss, ecstasy. And the whole philosophy was there. We were completely tuning in to the Caitanya-caritāmṛta philosophy that Lord Caitanya descends with His confidential associates to spread love of God but doesn't discriminate who is a fit candidate and who is not. These were the verses we were putting into the daily letter. This was our mood, and Prabhupāda loved it.

From Śrutakīrti's point of view, the evening massage was a very special time, because Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed free of the pressure of the day's management. Śrutakīrti would bring several night blooming jasmine flowers from the garden, and Prabhupāda would place the fragrant blossoms near his nose during the massage. He would be even quieter and more relaxed than during the Kṛṣṇa book reading. There was no business to attend to; he had done a hard day's work. Although he would be rising after only three hours' rest, he now lay back, enwrapped in thought or chanting softly.

Some evenings Śrīla Prabhupāda would delay the massage and slowly walk back and forth in his bedroom, chanting on his beads, or he would sit on his bed and chant. But on most nights he would lie on his back, while Śrutakīrti massaged his legs. If he conversed with his servant at

all, it wouldn't be about ISKCON management. He might look at a picture on the wall and say, "How beautiful Kṛṣṇa is! How could they not be attracted to Kṛṣṇa?" Or sometimes he would talk about his childhood and other informal topics. But even at this relaxed time, he relished hearing the *saṅkīrtana* results, and so he would sometimes read Rāmeśvara's daily report or simply say something about preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

One night, after reading Rāmeśvara's ecstatic daily *saṅkīrtana* report, Prabhupāda felt moved to write a message on the back of the report. Dating the paper April 20, 1973, he wrote,

My dear boys and girls, you are working so hard for broadcasting the glories of Lord Krishna's lotus feet and thus my Guru Maharaj will be so pleased upon you. Certainly my Guru Maharaj will bestow His blessings thousand times more than me and that is my satisfaction. All Glories to the assembled devotees.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

N.B. Everyone should go with the Sankirtan Party as soon as possible.

Rāmeśvara may have been shy while quietly waiting at the bottom of the stairs for the slightest recognition from Śrīla Prabhupāda, but when he received the prize jewel of this handwritten note, he ran off, shouting to share the good fortune with any devotee who was still awake.

Tripurāri: Every morning after maṅgala-āratī there was always a little group clustered around the door of the temple, because you weren't supposed to talk in the temple while chanting japa early in the morning. So Rameśvara was standing at the doorway chanting, and he called us over, until a little cluster of devotees were there at the doorway. He showed us Prabhupāda's note. Some of the other devotees got frustrated, seeing that we were talking during the japa period. They felt we were a distraction or that we weren't absorbed in our service or in japa. But actually we were really intensely absorbed in thinking of saṅkīrtana, and when we returned to our japa, we began chanting with the desire to be able to go out and please Prabhupāda.

In a few days Prabhupāda's words—"Everyone should go with the Sankirtan Party as soon as possible"—reached the other temples. And although Śrīla Prabhupāda soon left Los Angeles, returning to India, his message stayed and deepened the devotees' convictions.

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In the summer of 1973 the devotees found that at concerts they could

distribute hundreds of *Kṛṣṇa* books in a few hours. The *Kṛṣṇa* book, available now as a paperback trilogy with a foreword by George Harrison, was especially attractive to young people. In July, Rāmesvara wrote to Prabhupāda in London, telling him that the Los Angeles temple was distributing two thousand *Kṛṣṇa* books a week and that at one concert devotees had distributed six hundred books in two hours.

The devotees in Los Angeles decided that Tripurārī and a few other leading *sankīrtana* men should travel from temple to temple and share their experience. Ramesvara wrote to Prabhupāda, "This is the mercy of Śrī Śrī Rukmīnī Dvarakadhīśa [the Deities of the L A temple] that we can send out so many devotees to other centers. It is the real opulence of New Dvaraka." Śrīla Prabhupāda replied on August 3:

There is no doubt about it, to distribute books is our most important activity. The temple is a place not for eating and sleeping, but as a base from which we send out our soldiers to fight with *māyā*. Fight with *māyā* means to drop thousands and millions of books into the laps of the conditioned souls. Just like during the war time the Bombs are raining from the sky like anything.

I like also your program of sending out your best men to teach the others. That is the actual progress of Krishna Consciousness, to train others. Continue this program so that in the future every devotee in our movement will know the art of distributing books. This is approved by me.

A letter from a woman who had recently received some of Prabhupāda's books appeared in the July BBT newsletter. The letter had been written on TWA in flight stationery:

In the S F airport before I departed for London, the *Kṛṣṇa* book was given to me by one of your followers. I never felt so happy & privileged, or honored would be a better phrase.

I am sick of this material rat race. I want a higher life without material riches and games.

On her way back from London she had purchased another book, *Rājā rādyā*, in the Chicago airport and now asked for more help. "It is beautiful," she concluded.

As Tripurārī traveled and taught his method of *sankīrtana*, more devotees

followed his example and began wearing a wig and conventional dress while selling books. This way of dressing made approaching people much easier and increased the potential for distributing books. Some devotees, however, disapproved.

One day in September 1973, during Śrīla Prabhupāda's morning walk on Juhu Beach in Bombay, a few of his *sannyasī* disciples brought the matter before him. Prabhupāda referred to the many gentlemen strolling along Juhu Beach who would always offer respects to the devotees by folding their hands and saying, "Hare Kṛṣṇa." This was the sign of a real Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Prabhupāda said: anyone who sees him immediately thinks of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees, therefore, should prominently display such Vaiṣṇava markings as *tilaka*, *sikha*, and neck beads, so that people could know, "Here are Hare Kṛṣṇa people."

One *sannyasī* remarked that in America devotees were now wearing wigs and dressing like hippies to distribute books. He did not let his own men do this because he felt it self-defeating if people didn't even know they were speaking to a devotee. If someone wanted to distribute books, he concluded, Kṛṣṇa would help that devotee find a place where he could do so without having to disguise himself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda turned to the others, asking their opinions. One devotee suggested that the reason the devotees in America wore "disguises" was because otherwise they would not be permitted to distribute books in certain places. Prabhupāda heard the opinions and then gave his decision: these disguises should be stopped immediately. "We shall not in any way sacrifice our standards," he said. "We must maintain our principles strictly. This dressing with long hair and *karmī* clothes is the tendency to once again become hippies. Because you were hippies, that tendency is still there. So this should be stopped."

Walking back toward the temple, Prabhupāda saw a poor man evacuating by the roadside in public view. "He is not changing his standard, despite public opinion," Prabhupāda said. "Can we not maintain our standards as strictly as they are maintaining theirs?"

A letter was drafted and signed by Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, Prabhupāda's secretary, and Prabhupāda signed also, on a line marked "approved." The letter stated that all *saṅkīrtana* devotees should always wear *tilaka*, *dhottā*, neck beads, and *sikhā*, and should depend on Kṛṣṇa rather than disguises to help distribute books. At the bottom of the letter, however, was a PS — "Śrīla Prabhupāda, upon checking the above, added, 'If they like, they may wear coat and pants. But *tilak*, *sikha*, beads—these things should be there.'"

Previously Śrīla Prabhupāda had addressed this subject in various letters. To Jagadīśa in Canada Prabhupāda had replied that there was no objection to wearing Western clothes, including a wig or hat. "We have to take whatever is favorable position for executing Kṛṣṇa consciousness," Prabhupāda had written. "Sometimes we may adopt such means in order to help distribute books." But in February 1973 he had written to Rūpānuga that he did not want devotees dressing as hippies.

This should be stopped. We should not give anyone cause to call us hippies, but the devotees may dress up in respectable clothes like ladies and gentlemen in order to distribute my literatures under special circumstances.

Wherever there are individuals there are bound to be differences of opinion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda preferred to be spared such detailed management. His GBC men should consult among themselves and then present their conclusions to him for a final decision. "In this way," Prabhupāda had written, "I will be free to concentrate on my translation of Śrīmad Bhagavatam."

The letter from India reached Karandhara in Los Angeles, but before announcing that all *sankīrtana* in Western clothes must be stopped, he wanted Prabhupāda to hear his side of the story. He gave an elaborate report on the benefits of devotees' wearing ordinary Western dress while selling books. The main thing Prabhupāda seemed to be objecting to he concluded, was a disreputable appearance—devotees looking like hippies. He now informed Prabhupāda that the distributors were actually clean, well-groomed and presentable. If the book distributors were restricted to appearing in public with shaved head and *dhottī*, he said, then the distribution would decline by about two thirds. "If extremes and misapplications have occurred," he wrote, "they should be worked out rather than giving up the whole program."

This time Śrīla Prabhupāda replied in favor of Western dress.

Yes, you can go on with your book distribution as you were doing before, there is not any harm. I thought that our men were becoming like hippies, but now I understand from you that this is not the case. So I have no objection. Our main business is to distribute books, and

from the reports I am receiving from all over the world, the progress is very encouraging

A disagreement arose about the distributors' techniques. A few people had written the ISKCON secretary complaining that they had been misled or pressured into buying a book, a complaint to which devotees responded variously.

The book distributors were protective of Prabhupada's order that as many books as possible be distributed. Just because a few people had complained, they argued, was no reason to cool down book distribution. They quoted Śrīla Prabhupada's statements that opposition to *saṅkīrtana* indicates its purity and genuineness.

Śrīla Prabhupada had explained this point in his books in discussing the historical incident of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* parties' being stopped by the Muslim government. Prabhupada had written,

We must remember that such incidents took place in the past, five hundred years ago, and the fact that they are still going on indicates that our *saṅkīrtana* movement is really authorized, for if *saṅkīrtana* were an insignificant material affair, demons would not object to it.

People in America had also objected to public chanting, to the devotees' dress, to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy, to the food. Someone would always oppose. The main thing, the book distributors said, was to save the conditioned souls, who were heading for a hellish next life. If a person got a book and read just one page, his life could be changed.

Other devotees, however, including temple presidents, were disturbed by the complaints. Someone recalled that Prabhupāda had already addressed this point in 1970.

Do all activities with great enthusiasm. All our activities must be open so that no one may criticize our mission, so all dealing must be to the standard of Vaiṣṇavism. As everything is undertaken forthrightly in Krishna Consciousness in a Krishna Conscious way, then Lord Krishna will be pleased to provide all facilities for aiding such sincere service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted the book distributors to execute his order,

but he was not giving them a license to do anything and everything and claim it was for Kṛṣṇa. Preaching required expertise, not only in getting people to take a book but in giving them the right impression.

The book distributors maintained that they were doing the best they could but that they would try to improve. If other devotees thought they could do better, then they should demonstrate how to distribute books without disturbing anyone. Distributing books all day, day after day, was hard. People were already agitated by their minds and senses and harassed by their occupations, governments, and personal relationships. No wonder even an innocent devotee sometimes disturbed them.

The tactics in question were mostly the book distributors' lines. The distributors would say that they were students, that they were helping get young people off drugs, or that the books were about how to solve modern-day crises. None of these things were untrue, but the emphasis was sometimes excessive.

A mature devotee could speak more directly. Tripurārī would tell how the books describe an ancient civilization in which people knew how life should be lived. He would represent himself as a member of an organization that had communities all over the world where people could benefit from the example of an alternative life-style. Tripurārī and others were able to be both personal and, in a casual way, philosophical, as they spoke about spiritual life. They made quick friends with strangers and convinced them to take books. But more and more devotees were taking up book distribution, and many were inexperienced.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's philosophy was clear, but different interpretations persisted. Without referring to specific techniques, Prabhupāda simply stressed the purity of book distribution and encouraged the book distributors to continue without interruption; the main thing was to distribute books.

Devotees continued to press Śrīla Prabhupāda for further clarification. The book distributors were concerned that the urgency of book distribution not be minimized, whereas other responsible ISKCON leaders were concerned that loose practices might hamper the Society's progress. Prabhupāda replied to questions by Balī-mardana of New York with a letter that became particularly influential.

The real preaching is selling books. You should know the tactic how to sell without irritating. What your lecture will do for three minutes, but if he reads one page his life may be turned. We don't want to ir-

irritate anyone, however. If he goes away by your aggressive tactics, then you are nonsense and it is your failure. Neither you could sell a book, neither he would remain. But if he buys a book, that is the real successful preaching.

Prabhupāda's position was clear: the books should be sold, but expertly. And lest there be any doubt, Prabhupada reiterated that the book distribution was the best preaching. "The success of your preaching will be substantiated by how many books are sold." Prabhupāda also wrote, "The art is to sell many, many books and not to irritate the public."

As books continued to go out by the millions, many people expressed their thanks on receiving a book. Only occasionally would someone complain. But within ISKCON, the dialogue regarding book distribution techniques continued. When Śrī Govinda, the president of ISKCON Chicago, wrote Prabhupada, Prabhupada encouraged him in his attempt to reform the devotees engaged in excessive practices.

So it is not very much advisable to make lies just to sell books. If we simply stick to describing how wonderful is Krishna, that will not be a lie! But other things, lies, they will not help us to train ourselves in truthfulness. Lie to some, not to others, that is not a good philosophy. Rather the brahmins are always truthful, even to their enemies. There is sufficient merit in our books that if you simply describe them sincerely to anyone, they will buy. That art you must develop, not art of lying. Convince them to give by your preaching the Absolute Truth, not by tricking. That is the more mature stage of development of Krishna Consciousness.

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November 1973

Scores of men and women were going out every day to distribute books. One November day the devotees of the New York City temple broke the ISKCON world record by distributing 13,200 pieces of literature. On the same day they also distributed 15,000 pieces of *prasādam*. The ISKCON total for 1973 was 4,169,000 books sold. When Śrīla Prabhupāda received these figures, he replied to Rāmeśvara,

I have faith in your words that next year the figures will be far beyond

what they were last year. It is the nature of the spiritual energy, it is always increasing if we just apply our energy.

Early in January 1974, Śrīla Prabhupāda again returned to Los Angeles. One morning he gave a *Śrīmad Bhagavatam* lecture stressing book distribution. "There is no literature throughout the universe like *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*," he said. "There is no comparison or competition. Every word is for the good of the human society. Each and every word. Therefore we stress so much in the book distribution. Somehow or other, if the book goes in one's hand, he'll be benefited. At least he'll see, 'I have taken so much price—let me see what is there.' If he reads one *sloka*, his life will become successful. If he reads one *sloka*, one word! This is such a nice thing. Therefore, we are stressing so much, please distribute books, distribute books, distribute books."

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The year 1974 began with what appeared to be a serious setback. The Supreme Court ruled against Vietnamese war protestors' distributing political leaflets in private malls. Citizens of nonprofit groups—religious included—could solicit on private property only with permission from the proprietor. The malls that the book distributors had frequented were suddenly off limits.

The same constitution that barred the devotees from private property, however, gave them access to public property, and when ISKCON devotees filed a lawsuit against the city-owned Las Vegas airport, they won an immediate injunction on the basis that the airport was denying them their right to free speech. This ruling promised to open a new era in book distribution, with possibilities of legalizing *sankīrtana* in all major airports.

Devotees saw this as proof that Kṛṣṇa was working through Prabhupāda to increase book distribution. No previous spiritual master had ever distributed Vedic literature on so great a scale. This was another sign that Śrīla Prabhupāda was Kṛṣṇa's empowered representative. And by the devotees' efforts to follow Prabhupāda's order, Kṛṣṇa was empowering them also. But only if they were willing to go through the trials of surrender and renunciation.

Praghoṣa: *I went out one day to the airport, and I walked up to one black man and said, "Excuse me, sir." And BAM! He punched me right*

in the face and knocked me down. At that moment so many thoughts went through my mind. I could just hear Tripurāri's words ringing in my ears from the class that morning: "We must be determined. . . ." So I just said to myself, "Well, I'll just stand right back up and keep trying." I stood up, and I got the inspiration to just turn around and try to hand the next person one of Prabhupāda's books.

Another time a husband and wife approached me, but the husband didn't want anything to do with me. When the woman saw that the book was spiritual, she stopped and said, "What's this book about?" I said very bluntly, "This book explains birth and death and what's beyond." She said, "Oh." Then she turned to her husband and said, "Please buy it." But he said, "I don't want it. Come on, let's go." She said, "Please!" But her husband said, "You buy it." And he walked off.

So she stayed with me and said, "Could you tell me a little more about this?" I started to explain the book, and then I said, "Where are you coming from?" She said, "I'm coming from Rochester." Then she revealed to me that she was coming from the Mayo Clinic and that she had terminal cancer and was going to die. She said, "I desperately want to read this book." She gave me ten dollars and said, "Thank you very much." Then she took the book and ran off.

A little later she came back and found me and shook my hand and thanked me. These kind of experiences that devotees would have day in and day out gave us the feeling of being like emissaries or representatives of something very special. By this we became more attached to Śrīla Prabhupāda and to executing his work. We would see these miracles take place.

Keśava Bhārati: I used to distribute books in the San Francisco airport. I thought that this airport was particularly difficult and that if I could be in L.A. I could probably distribute as many books as Tripurāri. I was a little proud. Then I got the chance to distribute with him.

I am very outgoing and gregarious, so I don't have any problem stopping people or anything like that. But half an hour and then an hour went by, and Tripurāri had distributed five and then ten books. But I couldn't get anybody to stop and shake my hand even. It was incredible! But I knew it was because I was too proud. Another hour went by, and still no one would stop and shake my hand. I was bewildered, because I wanted to pass out Prabhupāda's books. Finally I just sat down out of frustration. I was nearly crying.

Tripurāri came up and preached to me. He told me I should pray to

Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda in times like this and not to worry about it, that this happens. So I got it together, and then about ten to fifteen people in a row came and talked with me, and some of them took books. So when we discussed it afterward, we could understand that we were just instruments in Lord Caitanya's hands. This is how we developed the sankīrtana philosophy. Through the book distribution we came to realize who Probhupāda was and to appreciate him more.

Lavanga-latikā: All day I would stand at the top of the stairs, and thousands and thousands of people would come by. And we would distribute hundreds and hundreds of books. We used to take lines from Probhupāda's books. Tripurārī used to talk about the swans' taking milk from water. So we used to use that a lot in approaching someone. We'd say how these great sages used to know how to separate milk from water, separate the essence. He also said the pictures were windows to the spiritual world. We'd say, "This book is like the brilliant sun that will drive away the darkness of ignorance in this age of Kali."

I found the best way to distribute the books was to use Probhupāda's own words. Probhupāda said if we read one line to someone, that person can make one hundred times spiritual advancement. One time a devotee complained to Probhupāda that people were throwing some of the books away. But then we could understand that Probhupāda wanted them distributed on a large scale. Not that you kept the book for a special person you thought might be intelligent enough to read it. Because Probhupāda said that if they read only one line they would be very much affected. So we could understand that Probhupāda wanted mass distribution, not that we just keep them for the special, right person.

Sura: Vaiṣeṣika was selling books in the airport with me. He would walk up to people and say, "Well, how are you doing, sir? All glories to the śrī-kṛṣṇa sankīrtana movement, the prime benediction for humanity at large, which cleanses the heart." He was repeating the Śikṣāṣṭaka prayers of Lord Caitanya right out of the book, and yet he was selling books. The books had pictures of Kṛṣṇa and devotional scenes on the cover, and sometimes some devotees couldn't understand how people could relate to these books. But Probhupāda wanted them distributed. And he was saying that we should preach on the merit of the book. When a devotee asked Probhupāda what we should say to distribute the books, Probhupāda replied kṛṣṇe śva-dhāmopagata, which is the verse that says the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is as brilliant as the sun and it has arisen just to give people

religion in this age of darkness. So we were also repeating that verse and distributing books on faith.

We would go out and see the people actually becoming struck by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They would see that the devotees were very sincere and serious, and they would become impressed. Daily on saṅkīrtana we would see people appreciating Prabhupāda's books. There was also harassment, but Prabhupāda had talked about it, that there was always difficulty. So everything was there from Prabhupāda to confirm whatever realizations we had. Śrīla Prabhupāda said a book salesman would sometimes have difficulty because he'll be sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected. But he tolerates.

In the airport we met professors, lawyers, all kinds of people who would stop and talk. They would challenge, and we would constantly have to defend Prabhupāda's books and his movement and speak up on behalf of Prabhupāda, more so than when we were just kids out on the parking lots talking to women and begging fifty cents for a pack of incense. We were presenting Prabhupāda's books to the scholars, coming into contact with Mayāvādīs, scientists, businessmen, people who were very sharp, in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, and San Diego. People there were very sharp and hard. And just by having to spiritually combat them and defend the movement, we become more mature in our understanding of Prabhupāda's books and how to present them in such a way that we could convince even people who didn't want to be convinced. We had to study Prabhupāda's books.

In 1974 several new parties formed just for distributing books. Tripurāri had been traveling as an emissary from Los Angeles, but now, with Śrīla Prabhupāda's permission, he formed a Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) saṅkīrtana party of some leading book distributors. The BBT distributors stationed themselves in various airports around the country, creating a significant increase in book distribution.

"Your entire program is approved by me," Prabhupāda wrote to Tripurāri. When Tripurāri asked if he could take *sannyāsa*, Prabhupāda replied that he was already doing more than any *sannyāsi*. In one letter Prabhupāda called him "the incarnation of book distribution."

Book distribution took another great stride forward when Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, Śrīla Prabhupāda's zonal secretary in India for four years,

returned to the U.S. Joining with his friend Viṣṇujana Swami, he helped form the Rādhā-Dāmodara *sankīrtana* party, traveling in a bus with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities to distribute books and hold festivals all over the U.S.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami: *When we first began the Rādhā-Dāmodara party our idea was to make as many devotees as possible by holding festivals at which we chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa and distributed prasādam. After Kṛṣṇa sent so many nice young men it was difficult to keep them always engaged. Then suddenly a letter arrived from Śrīla Prabhupāda in which he said that the kīrtana of book distribution was better than the kīrtana of public chanting. This transcendental instruction changed the course of our Rādhā-Dāmodara party. From then on I concentrated more and more on book distribution, and this gave Prabhupāda greater and greater pleasure. I had been in India for four years, but our main program had been enrolling life members. But now that I was in America Śrīla Prabhupāda was reminding me that preaching meant to distribute his books. So I became inspired that our party should distribute so many books that it equal all of the other book distribution of the rest of ISKCON worldwide. Day and night I was thinking of how to get out more and more books and thus overspread America with transcendental literature. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote me that this was his real ambition, to turn all of America into Vaiṣṇavas.*

Until we formed our Rādhā-Dāmodara party, the method of distributing books had been that an individual would be given either a large, medium, or small book, according to the size of the donation. But Prabhupāda told me that of all types of book distribution, to distribute his large books was most important. So I was always considering how to increase the number of large books. The problem was that people were willing to give small donations, but rarely would they give us large enough contributions to award giving them a large book. Then Kṛṣṇa gave me the idea that by adding together a few small donations from a number of persons, at least one of them could be given a large book, while the others could be given a Back to Godhead magazine or a small book. By this method we were able to increase the distribution of big books tremendously. Prabhupāda fully approved of this idea. As long as the Book Fund received payment for the books, Śrīla Prabhupāda allowed us to pass them out as quickly as we could, irrespective of the size of donation. Thus our Rādhā-Dāmodara party was able to distribute as many as fifty thousand big books in a single month.

Śrīla Prabhupāda showed special interest in the Rādhā-Dāmodara

party and approved loans from the BBT for the purchase of more buses, thus creating a *saṅkīrtana* army traveling in renovated Greyhound buses. By the end of 1974 the Rādhā-Dāmodara party had three buses, vans, and numerous men. Prabhupāda called the buses "moving temples," and he urged the Rādhā-Dāmodara devotees to continue their program, with certainty that they were pleasing Lord Caitanya. "I am glad that you have understood the importance of my books," Prabhupāda wrote, "therefore I am stressing it so much. Let everyone take these books."

Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged the Rādhā-Dāmodara party to expand to hundreds of buses and thus fulfill the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village. When a tight transcendental competition arose between the Los Angeles temple, Tripurārī's BBT party, and the Rādhā-Dāmodara party, Prabhupāda watched and approved it with pleasure.

Another party forming in 1974 was the BBT library party. It began with Hṛdayānanda Goswami's sending some *brahmacārīs* from his traveling party to visit prestigious universities in New England. The men attempted to sell entire sets of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to the professors, and even in their first attempts they met with great success.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had long cherished this idea, and even before coming to America he had gone to libraries in India with copies of his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* First Canto. By his efforts in New Delhi, the United States Library of Congress had obtained copies of those early volumes. Now his desire to see his books placed in all the U.S. libraries and universities was becoming a reality. Within a few months professors began writing favorable reviews, and some even ordered Prabhupāda's books for their college courses. "I very much like this program of the standing orders," Prabhupāda wrote. "Try to increase it up to fifty thousand such orders from the libraries."

Another party that formed in 1974 was Nāma-haṭṭa, a group of *brahmacārīs* led by two *sannyāsīs*. The Nāma-haṭṭa party would travel and distribute books, donating their profits toward Śrīla Prabhupāda's projects in Bombay, Mayāpur, and Vṛndāvana.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda became ill for several weeks in September of 1974, the book distribution reports were his best medicine. "Whenever I get report of my books selling," he wrote to the library party, "I feel

strength. Even now in this weakened condition I have got strength from your report." And during the same illness he wrote to Rāmeśvara,

Regarding book sales figures, please endeavor in this way. This is the only solace of my life. When I hear that my books are selling so nicely, I become energetic like a young man.

Śrīla Prabhupāda recovered his health, and by the end of 1974 his BBT was also in extraordinary health, with the temples again competing in a furious Christmas marathon. In America, the BBT reported to Prabhupāda that approximately 387,000 hardbound books had been sold during the year, a 67% increase over the previous year. And almost 4,000,000 *Back to Godheads* had been sold, an 89% increase. The American BBT sold the individual temples a total of 6,668,000 pieces of literature, a 60% increase.

Such news made Śrīla Prabhupāda "become energetic like a young man," and Prabhupāda and his book distribution movement headed into 1975 with all signs of increasing—doubling and tripling—the already astounding figures of 1974.

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Śrīla Prabhupāda had created his Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in 1972 as an independent entity to insure that his books could continue being produced and distributed. The BBT would operate exclusively for the benefit of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and yet it would exist independently.

The trust document stated that the trustees should divide the money from the sale of the books to ISKCON temples into two funds: one for printing books and one for purchasing ISKCON properties and building temples. Prabhupāda believed that if this fifty-fifty formula were followed, Kṛṣṇa would assure the success of ISKCON. Repeatedly he would refer to this formula in conversations and letters, even in his purports on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his BBT trustees authority to make printing plans, and the trustees would then consult him for approval. He would set the standards and guidelines for his BBT trustees to follow. Only after consulting him could they institute changes.

And to changes Prabhupāda was particularly averse. He would choose the book size, determine the artwork, and make suggestions about the

size of a particular printing, about shipping policies, about sales to temples—about almost every aspect of the BBT's publishing activities. Even when certain temples did not remit their payments to the BBT, Prabhupāda would become involved.

It is not good if such big temples who are setting the example for the whole Society do not pay their bills. This is most irregular. I am trying to retire from the administrative affairs, but if the presidents and GBC men make such disturbances, then how can I be peaceful? Things should be maintained automatically, then it will be peaceful for me.

He was a strict manager. "According to Vedic instruction," he said, "fire, debt, and disease should never be neglected. They must be extinguished by all means."

Śrīla Prabhupāda saw book distribution as (among other things) the basis for an economically sound ISKCON. Other businesses could also operate, but book-selling was the best, for it combined preaching with a good source of income. As he wrote to one of his temple presidents,

I am very encouraged by the report of how nicely our books are being distributed. This is our main business all over the world. If you give full attention to this, there will never be any shortage of funds.

And on another occasion,

Regarding the society's leaders emphasizing business, you should understand what is the meaning of business. Business means to help the preaching. Preaching needs financial help, otherwise, we have no need for business. So far as I understand, our book business is sufficient to support our movement.

Śrīla Prabhupāda also oversaw all BBT loans to temples; any G.B.C. secretary or temple president requesting a loan would have to approach him. In 1973 and 1974 he granted sizable loans for building, purchasing, or improving temples in Dallas, Hawaii, Sydney, Chicago, and Vancouver. He also granted a loan to the Rādhā-Dāmodara party for buying "traveling temples," or buses, and one to South America for printing books. Kṛtānānanda Mahārāja automatically received a fifty-thousand-dollar loan each year for New Vrindaban. But Prabhupāda would deny money requests

for projects he considered inconsistent with the purposes of the BBT. On November 6 he wrote to Rāmeśvara,

No, we cannot loan BBT money for any other purposes than what is mentioned in the BBT Agreement. These other loans for cows, equipment, and restaurants must all be re-paid, and no other loans other than for publishing and temple construction can be granted.

Beginning in 1974, Śrīla Prabhupāda utilized the BBT profits for constructing his main temples in India—Vṛndāvana, Māyapur, and especially Bombay. Rāmeśvara informed the devotees of this special function of the BBT.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is personally overseeing all the Indian programs and spending ... If one rupee is misspent Śrīla Prabhupāda becomes disturbed and chastizes the devotees (mercifully) — "... this money is earned by the sweat of many devotees, so why you are not careful?" Śrīla Prabhupāda wants to see our Vṛndāvana temple, SRI SRI KRISHNA-BALARAM Mandir completed by Janmastami. Prabhupāda wants to establish Sri Mayapur Temple as well. ... One interesting note in this connection is that in India, I've been told that 10 paise purchases 1 brick! 10 paise means US \$0.01—just think every penny you collect may buy one brick in India **EVERY PENNY COUNTS TOWARDS THESE TRANSCENDENTAL GOALS!**

"These places in India," Prabhupāda wrote, "are spiritually potent. By establishing temples in Māyapur and Vṛndāvana we assure that the purity of our movement will be kept intact."

In October of 1974 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Hamsadūta, his G.B.C. secretary for Germany, "Whenever there is any publication in any language, it enlivens me one hundred times." Although Śrīla Prabhupāda's order from Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was to preach and publish in the English language, he had expanded that order to include all the languages and countries of the world. "My first concern is that my books shall be published and distributed profusely all over the world," Śrīla Prabhupāda had written to one of the first devotees in Europe in 1972. Prabhupāda wrote always in English, but ever since 1968, when ISKCON had first begun

spreading to other countries, he had been talking of printing his books in foreign languages

When in 1972 a German edition of *Bhagavad gita* had been printed, Śrīla Prabhupada had written Hamsaduta, "You have done the right thing by printing *Bhagavad gita* in German language, and I very much appreciate that you have done this great service" By 1973, *sankirtana* parties had been traveling throughout Germany, distributing several hundred copies of *Bhagavad gita* a week Hamsaduta had promised that he would translate one book a month into German, and when in the fall of 1974 Prabhupada heard of six recently printed German translations, he replied, "This is very happy news for me. Thank you Overflood Europe with German books"

Śrīla Prabhupada said that whenever he published a book he felt that he had conquered an empire His books were the basis of the spiritual revolution that would eventually change humanity and save it from the pernicious effects of the age of Kali

"Produce voluminously Spanish language literature," Śrīla Prabhupada requested When Hrdayananda Goswami had become the zonal leader for South America, Śrīla Prabhupada had instructed him to emphasize printing and distributing books above opening temples "I also was printing even before I had big temples in the US," Prabhupada had written "So you may follow the footsteps of the previous *acaryas*"

Hrdayananda Goswami had organized a Spanish BBT in Mexico and had made book distribution his priority Early in 1974, when the Spanish BBT was ready to print translations of *Śrīmad Bhagavatam's* first volume, *Bhagavad gita*, and *Kṛṣṇa The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Prabhupada wrote,

By printing these books of our Kṛṣṇa Conscious philosophy in so many different languages we can actually inject our movement into the masses of persons all over the world, especially there in the western countries and we can literally turn whole nations into Kṛṣṇa conscious nations

When one hundred thousand copies of a Spanish *Back to Godhead* were printed, Śrīla Prabhupada wrote, "Now give them to everyone." Spanish book distribution became the second largest in the world, next to American

Bhagavan, Śrīla Prabhupada's representative in southern Europe, had been printing in French and Italian, and as early as December 1972 he had printed Prabhupada's *Easy Journey to Other Planets* in French By

the beginning of 1974, three parties in France were distributing daily one thousand books, including a French *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Already Bhagavān had printed the first Italian *Back to Godhead*, and a French *Śrī Isopaniṣad* was forthcoming.

Wherever devotees went, they knew their program was to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, follow the regulative principles, and arrange for printing and distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. When the first devotees had reached South Africa, they had proceeded just according to Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire, and he had replied to them, "Your report is very encouraging to me, that you distributed 110 Gītas in two days in Capetown."

Śrīla Prabhupāda often thought of having his books printed in Russian, and he wrote to the minister of education and culture in the U.S.S.R., suggesting they publish "a translation of the ancient classical Vedic literature, namely, *Bhagavad-gītā*" as already published by "the famous London publishing house of M.S.S. Macmillan Company." He also talked with his disciples about printing Russian translations in America.

Whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda met an interested person proficient in any foreign language, he would request that person to translate his books. In 1972 he had written,

I am also very encouraged to hear that Japanese language translations of some of my books will be brought out soon, because without books and magazines, what authority or what basis have we got for preaching?

Similarly, Śrīla Prabhupāda had written to an American devotee in Indonesia,

I am especially happy to hear that you have got a Chinese boy there who is doing some translating work. Yes, the Chinese-speaking portion of the world is very huge and it requires to infiltrate gradually, especially by distributing our literatures widely in Chinese languages. So his service is the greatest to Kṛṣṇa.

Later, when Prabhupāda heard that the Chinese boy, Yaśomati-suta, had finished translating three chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā* into Chinese, he wrote that they should immediately print those three chapters as a small book. ISKCON Australia rose to prominence in the book distribution competition and, by 1974, was competing with Los Angeles ISKCON and the Radha-Damodara party for world leadership. By the fall of 1974 about

a dozen top Australian and New Zealand distributors were selling daily more than twenty big books each. The centers in Australia, like those in America, more than doubled their book distribution between 1973 and 1974.

When book distribution had been just beginning in America in 1970, no books had been available in England. But within a year, *Kṛṣṇa* book distribution had begun there, and Śrīla Prabhupāda had written, "All of my disciples in London center are very intelligent, and they should unite around this single task of selling Krishna book widely throughout Britain." By 1974 the devotees in Britain were valiantly distributing books. During one busy six-day period, they distributed six hundred volumes of *Teachings of Lord Chaitanya*, four hundred of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and one thousand *Back to Godhead* magazines.

India was special. There Śrīla Prabhupāda had introduced book distribution through the ISKCON life membership program. Wealthy Indians were more inclined to accept the books as part of an ISKCON membership package, which included such benefits as free accommodations in ISKCON temples throughout the world. But in India, as elsewhere, Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his books distributed to colleges, to libraries, to prominent citizens, and to the masses.

By the end of 1974 Prabhupāda's disciples were ready to print Hindi and Bengali editions of *Back to Godhead*. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard that Western devotees in India were complaining of insufficient engagement, he replied, "I am pleased you are selling many Krishna Books daily. All our men should go out with books. There is sufficient engagement." To his G.B.C. secretary in India he wrote, "Engage all of them in book distribution specifically, and take with you some sankirtan party."

"Without books we will make no progress in India," Śrīla Prabhupāda had written to Tejās, his temple president in Delhi. Prabhupāda had also trained his leaders in India in the strict policy of "fifty-fifty." "Proceeds from life membership or any other collections should go fifty percent to the BBT and fifty percent for construction and other projects." On his order the American BBT had been making donations of books to India and by 1974 had donated three hundred thousand dollars worth of literature. Although America was the leading pioneer in book printing and distribution, Prabhupāda foresaw worldwide printing and distribution of his books—eventually to surpass that in the U.S.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had created transcendental competition among his disciples. In 1971 he had observed with pleasure Keśava in San Francisco leading the society in *Kṛṣṇa* book distribution. Prabhupāda had promised that he would leave Los Angeles and stay in San Francisco if Keśava out-distributed his brother, Karandhara. And over the years he had continued to instigate such competition, fanning the fires of book distribution. He would encourage the leaders to send him reports, and then he would respond with letters, raising the book distribution fever even higher.

The whole of ISKCON waited to hear the latest quote from Prabhupāda, inspiring them to go on and on. When Śrīla Prabhupāda had given the lecture in January 1974 stressing, "Distribute books, distribute books, distribute books," several devotees in the audience had vowed on the spot to dedicate their lives to that instruction. And when Prabhupāda had sent the handwritten note down from his room in Los Angeles—"Everyone should go with the Sankirtan Party as soon as possible"—that one line had created a spirit of sacrifice and dedication in the hearts of many disciples, who felt themselves destined to take up that order as their life and soul.

Although Rāmeśvara had been caught up by the waves of the *sankīrtana* ocean from the beginning, Śrīla Prabhupāda cast Rāmeśvara's service when he wrote,

Make program to distribute our books all over the world. Our books are being appreciated by learned circles, so we should take advantage. Whatever progress we have made is simply due to distributing these books. So go on and do not divert your mind for a moment from this.

When devotees in London reported to Śrīla Prabhupāda their increase in book and magazine sales, he responded by inviting them to compete.

I have heard that in San Francisco they are selling daily not less than 75 Kṛṣṇa Books. So I am very much encouraged to hear this. Now take this spirit of transcendental rivalry and consult with Dayaoanda and the others there in England to become the first rate book-sellers.

When writing to a *sannyāsī* disciple preaching in Scotland, where the devotees were perhaps not fully aware of the scope of book distribution in the U.S., Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned the latest book scores from New York and commented, "New York is leading the list."

Śrīla Prabhupāda also inspired the Society as a whole to compete with its previous years' efforts "Somehow the book distribution must be doubled and tripled as far as possible Do it" As soon as the BBT library party had been formed, Prabhupāda had told the members to get fifty thousand orders And he had asked the Rādhā Dāmodara party to expand to one hundred buses The competition was particularly high between Los Angeles, the Rādhā Dāmodara party, and Australia, and Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged them all, like a maestro calling for a *fortissimo* from the orchestra

Śrīla Prabhupāda was not giving careless, boastful instructions The determination and sacrifice required to achieve these seemingly unattainable goals he knew well, and he wanted his devotees to work as he worked, with total dedication He wanted them to try their utmost His was the logic of "hunting for the rhinoceros," he said If a man attempting to shoot a rhinoceros failed, no one would criticize him But if he succeeded, it would be considered wonderful Prabhupāda wrote to Rūpānuga

Your sankīrtana reports are very encouraging, especially that one girl, Gaurī dasī, has set an all ISKCON women's record of 108 big books This is very wonderful Formerly this would have been considered impossible, but now by Kṛṣṇa's grace everything is becoming possible Encourage them all to increase more and more.

Some devotees became confused by their Godbrothers' and Godsisters' rousing calls for competition and rivalry This seemed like the rivalry of the material world, which they had hoped to leave forever Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, explained the proper attitude of transcendental competition

Competition and profiteering spirit are always there in the living entity It is not that they can be artificially removed in some matter Factually we saw in Russia that by removing competition and profit calculation from society the people were not at all happy, and still these things are going on So we shall not expect that we are any different Only difference is, that our profit is for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, and our competition is how to please Kṛṣṇa more than someone else. Even amongst the Gopīs there is competition to please Kṛṣṇa, and there

is envy also. But this envy is not material, it is transcendental. They are thinking, Oh, she has done something more wonderful than me, that is very nice, but now let me do something even more wonderful, like that. So I am pleased that you desire for competition with your Godbrothers to spread Krishna Consciousness Movement all over the world by printing our books.

When a traveling *sāṅkīrtana* party from one temple intensively distributed books in another city, the authorities at the local temple would often be disturbed. This problem came before Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was inevitably called in to judge and to cool down the fires of competition. Prabhupāda wrote to Kṛṣṇa and Bhūtātma, who had traveled all the way from San Francisco to London to distribute books but had disturbed the devotees there by their fervor.

Ultimately, it shall be up to the local temple president if the presence of your party is favorable or not. Everything considered, if he agrees, you may stay; otherwise, if he judges it is unfavorable at the time, he may order you to go out. But just to avoid these things, better to arrange in advance with the GBC men concerned. Ours is a cooperative movement, with Kṛṣṇa and the advancement of the Kṛṣṇa movement at the center, and we must continue to sell as many books as possible. But discuss everything amongst yourselves and do it nicely without irritating anyone; that is the art.

Seeing the mighty efforts of the top book distributors, some devotees became envious, or at least dispirited, thinking themselves useless and unable to please Śrīla Prabhupāda. This problem also came before Śrīla Prabhupāda, who replied, "There must always be competition. That gives life. That cannot be separated from life. . . . The perfect society does not eliminate competition, but it eliminates envy, because everyone is weak before Kṛṣṇa."

But competition had its limit, as Prabhupāda explained to a doubting *brahmacārī* in Florida.

It is not so much important the quantity of books that we distribute, but that we serve Kṛṣṇa as best we can and depend on Him for the result. But it should not come to the point of making us lose our Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. When you have these feelings, do not mistake it for enviousness, but take it to be an indirect appreciation of the service

done by your other Godbrothers. This is spiritual. In the material world, when someone surpasses us in some way we become angry and plan how to stop him, but in the spiritual world when someone does some better service, we think, "Oh, he has done so nicely. Let me help him to execute his service."

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Competition might have been a catalyst, but by steadfastly distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement were experiencing the essence of loving service to Kṛṣṇa in separation, which is the highest spiritual ecstasy. "Don't try to see God," Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master had often said, "but act in such a way that God sees you." In other words, by submissively acting on the order of the servant of the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda's disciples were sure to attract Kṛṣṇa's loving attention.

The quickest way to catch Kṛṣṇa's attention, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, was to direct another person to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The book distributors, therefore, felt a special reciprocation with their spiritual master, and this impelled them to go on serving and distributing.

Saṅjaya: Philosophically we saw that going out and distributing books was what our spiritual master wanted us to do. We knew that. That was dear to us. We also had a real sense of idealism—that these books and magazines would change the world. Once you come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you actually see how crummy the world really is, how really contaminated things are, how envious people are, and how horrible material life is. You can see that. You don't feel that you yourself can change it, but you feel that whoever gets one of Prabhupāda's books and looks at it will be changed in a spiritual way. There was no question about it. We also felt a big change would come in the world in the future as Kṛṣṇa consciousness spread. Prabhupāda also said that if people just touch one of these books their lives will change. Our faith was in the books and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Keśava Bhārati: When you pass out a book, there is a certain reciprocation from Prabhupāda. There was a dramatic difference in our internal experience when a person would take a book compared to just taking some incense or something. We would actually experience Prabhupāda's association all day by distributing those books. We didn't feel left out just because certain devotees were physically closer to Prabhupāda. Book distributors always got strong enlivenment. We would read about Haridāsa Thākura

going out and rolling on the ground and begging people to chant That kind of thing would inspire us

Vaiṣeṣika We had Prabhupāda's books and different letters from him And we also knew that if we distributed lots of books, we could get our name in the newsletter, and we could think of how Prabhupāda would read it But I was just trying to keep up with the others Sometimes I would go a couple of hours without giving anyone a book Everyone else would just be passing them out like crazy I would try, and people would all but spit in my face. They were pushing me around It was very heavy for me. I would sometimes just walk off and start crying, it was so heavy But I knew this book distribution was pleasing to Prabhupāda, and I just wanted to be part of it

We used to think how Prabhupāda was spending so much time behind a dictating machine just writing these books We would meditate on how he would sleep just a few hours a day and minimize everything else to write these books So we were also trying to cut down our other activities and just go out and distribute books Prabhupāda said a devotee should be in the mood of the six Goswāmīs, so we were singing those prayers every day We felt a real connection Even in the beginning a devotee told me, "Where is Prabhupāda, do you know?" And then he said, "He's in his books" That mood was always there. We always felt that connection.

Jagaddhātri devī dāsi When I was distributing Prabhupāda's books I understood that that was the most pleasing thing I could do for him I was helping him to fulfill his spiritual master's instructions, and so he was pleased. And he was even more pleased if I did it nicely I always used to hear the story about how Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati would be happy if someone went out and distributed even one magazine, because it's actually the mood of sankīrtana, of going out and trying to give mercy to the conditioned souls, that counts

I always wanted to do welfare work I like the feeling of doing something for people. So this is the summum bonum of helping people. You are helping them to go back to Godhead. So that was my motivation And we automatically become purified by bringing other living entities to Kṛṣṇa.

Tripurārī I got inspired mostly by Prabhupāda's greatness—how he was staunchly following his Guru Maharāja. It was his Guru Maharāja's order, and therefore he was doing it I was never very scholarly or intelligent I never thought that I had much brains or talent I was never trained practically in any kind of skill and I didn't have much education I took it like that—that I was talking to the most fallen people and

that I was the most fallen myself I was just doing what Prabhupada wanted, because he wanted I would pray to Prabhupada to help me realize why he wanted book distribution Then within I would get inspiration, and it would come out in all of my talks about book distribution

That time that I stayed out at the airport when all the devotees went back with Prabhupada to the temple very much affected my whole spiritual life. I was very much intimately connected with Prabhupada. But my closest association with him was by following his instructions and just getting down to work and not trying to enjoy the spiritual master but serve him

Vr̥ndavana vilasīṇī devī dāśī When Prabhupada gave that famous lecture in Los Angeles, "Distribute books, distribute books, distribute books," right then I wanted to take it up Whenever he wrote to Ramesvara, it was really to "Ramesvara and Company" We all felt included We are all eternal book distributors—a team together And I wanted to be part of it It was Lord Caitanya's eternal sankīrtana party, and we all wanted to be part of it It's going on in every planet, in every universe. I know it is pleasing to Śrīla Prabhupada

I would relate to book distribution like the battle of Kurukṣetra It's a battle, but Kṛṣṇa is right there It's like Kurukṣetra Number Two I'm sure all book distributors feel like that You feel like Kṛṣṇa is right there, and He's going to win You just have to take shelter of Him You may not win this battle, but you win the overall war So I always felt connected with Prabhupada, because he's telling us in his books about the great devotees that we can take shelter of It's all by his mercy He's giving us these books, and he's in these books

Sura We were so much addicted to selling Prabhupada's books that we didn't want to do anything else. We would just go straight to the airport and start distributing and not stop, except for maybe a twenty minute lunch break and maybe some reading for twenty minutes—otherwise non stop until 7 30 or 8 00 at night We really felt that Śrīla Prabhupāda was protecting us

One time out at the airport I was given a BBT newsletter Maybe it was due to the exhaustion or maybe it was due to some false sentimentality or whatever, but I was reading Prabhupāda's remarks about book distribution, and I became very moved I was by myself at the airport, and I just started crying because I thought of how devotees all over the world are so beautiful, so wonderful hearted, distributing books and working so hard I was just really appreciating Prabhupāda and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement Prabhupāda had said something in the newsletter

about book distribution, and it just touched me. We were so absorbed in books, books, books, that whenever Prabhupāda would say anything about book distribution, we would go nuts. That meant it was our connection to Prabhupāda. We weren't big guns who could sit at a meeting with Prabhupāda or get personal attention so much. Maybe during some morning walks at the Māyāpur festival we got to sneak in with the śaṅnyāsīs, but otherwise our book distribution was our connection with Prabhupāda. When he would mention something about book distribution, it would be our life and soul.

Lavaṅga-latikā-devī dāśī: Having heard Śrīla Prabhupāda speak and knowing that he was always reading from these books, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and that he was preaching that you have to distribute this knowledge to others made it all very simple. That is, you just knew that this was Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire. He was always telling us that he was giving us this knowledge and that once you have this knowledge, you have to distribute it to others. Śrīla Prabhupāda came to America to preach with his disciples. So we must do it, because it's Prabhupāda's desire. He spent so much time translating these books to be distributed. You just want to distribute to others, and you want people to have these books in their homes.

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Vṛndāvana, India

April 20, 1975

Śrīla Prabhupāda installed the Deities for the grand opening of the Krishna-Balarām Mandir. Almost a thousand disciples were present, and the governor of Uttar Pradesh was the guest of honor. After years of hard endeavor, the grand opening was a climactic triumph for Śrīla Prabhupāda and his movement. While still standing at the altar after having offered the first āraṭh to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Prabhupāda addressed the crowd, explaining that this was an international temple, where people from all over the world could come to worship and take shelter of Gaura-Nitāi, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Later that evening, Śrīla Prabhupāda sat in his room with a few G.B.C. men. The buttons on his kurta open because of the heat, his legs and bare feet extended under the low table, he relaxed, and his men sat close around him in the dim light of the desk lamp. It was a milestone, he said,

but still they had to go forward, not merely savor their success. Many things were still required to make the temple and guesthouse operative.

Śrīla Prabhupada was thinking beyond Vrndavana. "This temple construction is so important," he said, "that I'm willing to spend many lakhs to open a temple like this. And yet as important as it is, the book production is even more important." This was a significant reaffirmation of the priority of book production, even while in the midst of this splendid temple opening, he was stressing that book production was more important.

Śrīla Prabhupada seemed displeased, however, because for months his *Caitanya caritamṛta* had been delayed by his Sanskrit editor. He said with a scowl that although he had finished the *Caitanya caritamṛta*, it remained unpublished. He had also completed all four volumes of the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad Bhagavatam* and was beginning the Fifth, yet only one volume of the Fourth Canto had been published.

One of the devotees present, not understanding Prabhupada's point, remarked that since Prabhupada was going next to Hawaii he would be able to write there in peace and quiet. Prabhupada replied that he was not encouraged to write when his manuscripts were not being published.

The BBT Press, after several years in New York, was about to relocate in Los Angeles, where Ramesvara would become the new BBT Press supervisor. Ramesvara, unaware of the delay in publishing the *Caitanya caritamṛta* manuscript, learned of it now, in Vrndavana. He promised Prabhupada that he would immediately get the Press set up in Los Angeles and begin producing *Caitanya caritamṛta*.

That Śrīla Prabhupada had completed the entire *Caitanya caritamṛta* manuscript in eighteen months during 1973 and 1974 was a remarkable feat. In those same months he had been intensely engaged in many affairs of management while constantly traveling. He had confronted major problems with leaders who had left their posts, he had personally attended to GBC duties in India, and he had dealt with other ISKCON managerial affairs. He had authorized many large BBT loans and had approved the expansion and development of ISKCON in all areas of the world, in addition to responding regularly to large volumes of mail, speaking daily to guests, and giving *Bhāgavatam* lectures wherever he went. His only time for writing had been on arising at one in the morning, and he had persistently worked two or three hours each day.

While Śrīla Prabhupada traveled from Vrndavana to Australia, Ramesvara and Rādhavallabha worked in Los Angeles to establish the new BBT offices. Prabhupada was still meditating on his completed *Caitanya*

caritāmṛta manuscript waiting to be published. From Australia he wrote,

The Caitanya-caritāmṛta is complete (12 parts) and only 3 parts are published, and now the 5th Canto is almost finished. So why these books are not being published? This is our first business. Immediately these pending books (17 in total) must all be published. Why the delay? The U.S. printer's binding is better than Dai Nippon. So, some may be printed in the U.S. and some in Japan, but the pending books must be finished in a very short time. When I see so many books pending, it does not encourage me to translate. When I see books printed, I become encouraged to write more and more. We can talk this over more in Hawaii. Now you and Hansaduta expedite the publishing work. This is your business. And push on the selling. You request Tripurari Maharaja in this connection along with others. Now, Bhavananda Swami and Gargamuni Swami are there. They are also expert in pushing this on. By combined effort, publish as quickly as possible and immediately Caitanya-caritāmṛta should be done.

In Los Angeles Rāmeśvara had only completed the lease arrangements for the new building for the Press. The BBT artists had just arrived, and editors, proofreaders, and other production workers would soon be coming. The Press had purchased a computer typesetter, and the devotees were being trained to use it. Carpenters knocked down walls to build a photo lab and darkroom. Additional plumbing had to be installed, and the entire Press had to be set up within one month. Śrīla Prabhupāda was coming in June, and everything would have to be ready and running.

By the time Śrīla Prabhupāda reached Hawaii in May, the Press in Los Angeles was preparing for operation. Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary phoned Los Angeles often: "Prabhupāda is angry. He keeps talking about the unpublished books. You'd better be prepared when he arrives."

Rāmeśvara and Rādhavallabha had investigated the necessities and the difficulties in printing the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* manuscript, which they concluded would come in seventeen volumes. One of the main problems they discovered was the lack of an expert Bengali editor.

Most of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* was in Bengali. Although the BBT editors were experienced in Sanskrit, because they were not proficient in Bengali, the work was progressing slowly. Also, Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted many paintings in his books, and the art department would need many months to meet his requests.

Never before had the BBT lagged so far behind Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Rāmeśvara and Rādhāvallabha, straining their brains to produce books quickly and efficiently, devised a stepped-up production schedule. By the old schedule they could publish a book every three or four months, but on the new schedule they decided they could produce a book a month. In that way, they would eventually catch up with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Rāmeśvara was eager to present Prabhupāda with this plan when he came to Los Angeles.

More phone calls came from Prabhupāda's secretary. Prabhupāda had heard about the preparation of the Press buildings, but he had also heard that his name had not been displayed on the front of the BBT building. He was always insistent to preserve ISKCON's disciplic succession, foreseeing that unless ISKCON stressed A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami as the founder-*ācārya*, in the future persons might claim their rights of ISKCON leadership or of ownership of ISKCON properties. In the rush for completing the buildings, the BBT managers had overlooked this important detail.

June 20, 1975

On arriving in Los Angeles, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a joyous welcome. He was accompanied by leading *sannyāsīs* and G.B.C. secretaries, including Kīrtanānanda Swami, Viṣṇujana Swami, Brahmānanda Swami, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, and others. Later, sitting in his room—one of his favorites in all of ISKCON—he spoke only briefly about the backlog of unprinted books. He seemed mildly disturbed but said little. He was very pleased, however, to see the temple and the Deities of Rukmīṇī-Dvārakādhiśa.

In his short arrival speech he had explained why he was so urgently pressing his disciples to produce his books. "I have no personal qualification," he had said from the plushly upholstered *vyāsāsana*, "but I simply try to satisfy my *guru*, that's all. My Guru Mahārāja asked me that, 'If you get some money, you print books.' So there was a private meeting, talking. Some of my important Godbrothers also were there—it was in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. So Guru Mahārāja was speaking to me that, 'Since we have got this Baghbazar marble temple, there has been so much dissension. And everyone thinking who will occupy this room or that room. I wish therefore to sell this temple and the marble and print some books.' Yes, so I took up this from his mouth, that he is very fond of books. And he told me personally, 'If you get some money, print books.' Therefore I am

stressing on this point—Where is bank? Where is book? So kindly help me. That is my request. Print as many books as possible in as many languages as possible, and distribute throughout the whole world. Then the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will automatically increase.”

The next morning, while walking on Venice Beach, Śrīla Prabhupāda delivered an extraordinary ultimatum. Surrounded by devotees, he walked along, poking the sand softly with his cane. “These seventeen volumes unpublished,” he began, “are a great problem for our movement.”

“Yes, Prabhupāda,” Rāmeśvara responded, attentive and concerned. The other devotees also nodded, commiserating. Something must be done.

“Yes,” Prabhupāda continued, “they must be published immediately.”

“Yes, Prabhupāda,” Rāmeśvara replied obediently.

“So I think they can be printed in two months,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said conclusively.

Rāmeśvara wasn’t sure he had heard correctly. The Press had only just opened. The artists didn’t even have the lights in their room. Two months was illogical, impossible. Now was the moment to tell Śrīla Prabhupāda the plan for increased production Rāmeśvara stepped closer.

“Śrīla Prabhupāda,” he began, “we’ve been meeting about this, and now that the Press is finally here and established, I think we can increase production four times. We think that now we can go from producing one book every four months to producing one of your books every month.” Now both Rāmeśvara and Rādhāvallabha were walking together beside Śrīla Prabhupāda, with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Brahmānanda Swami walking on his other side.

“One book every month,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said, as if thinking out loud and considering it. “That means over one year. It is not fast enough.” The other devotees looked over at Rāmeśvara and Rādhāvallabha, who glanced at each other.

“You have to do all the books in two months’ time,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said again. They had clearly heard it this time, and the two managers were stunned in disbelief.

“Śrīla Prabhupāda,” Rāmeśvara said, “I think that’s impossible. Maybe we can go faster...”

Śrīla Prabhupāda suddenly stopped walking. Planting his cane firmly in the sand, he turned to Rāmeśvara and said, without anger but very gravely, “Impossible is a word found in the fool’s dictionary.”

Suddenly Rāmeśvara realized his spiritual life was on the line. To say "impossible" now would mean he had no faith in Kṛṣṇa's representative, no faith in the power of God. He must throw away his material estimations and rational common sense.

While Ramesvara and Rādhavallabha stood speechless, Śrīla Prabhupāda resumed walking, accompanied by the others. The two devotees hurried to catch up, but now everyone looked at them as if to say, "Come on. Stop doubting. You have to do it." Rāmeśvara asked Śrīla Prabhupāda if he could discuss this with the other devotees at the Press and then report back. "Oh, yes," Prabhupada replied, "whatever is required." Rāmeśvara and Rādhavallabha dropped back, while Śrīla Prabhupāda and the others continued down the beach.

Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to the temple and toured the new Press facilities—a graphic arts building and an editorial building. While walking outside on a second floor veranda, he noticed below a two foot strip of bare earth running between the two buildings. He seemed annoyed and said that they should plant grass there.

In the layout room a transparency of baby Kṛṣṇa carrying Nanda Mahārāja's shoes was on the light table, and Śrīla Prabhupāda began laughing when he saw it. He approved of the new typesetting equipment, which worked faster than the previous equipment, and when the devotees demonstrated it for him, he remarked that in India he had dreamed of having such a Press.

In Rādhavallabha's office Prabhupada sat in the production manager's chair and looked up at the large bulletin board that displayed all the steps in the production of a book. He laughed and said, "For someone like me, this makes it even more complicated."

Śrīla Prabhupāda walked into every room in the two buildings and saw all the equipment. This modern technology was fine, he concluded, as long as they could use it to meet the deadline of seventeen books in two months, otherwise, their equipment was like the technology of the material scientists who tried to go to the moon—useless.

All through the morning program in the temple, Rāmeśvara and Rādhavallabha tried to concentrate on chanting their *japa* and on Prabhupāda's class, but all they could think of was arranging for the production of seven teen volumes in two months. And by the time they met with the Press workers, they had become convinced it could be done. It was as if some mystical power was going to descend. Somehow or other it could be done. So they presented the plan and convinced the other workers.

"It can be done," Rāmeśvara said later, talking with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"Hmmm," Śrīla Prabhupāda replied.

But there were some conditions, Rāmeśvara said. For the Bengali editing to go smoothly, the editors would have to be able to regularly consult Śrīla Prabhupāda. Immediately Prabhupāda agreed, adding that he was prepared to stay in Los Angeles as long as necessary to insure that they met the two-month deadline. Another condition Rāmeśvara raised was that the artists would be working as quickly as humanly possible, but the paintings might not be of the best quality. "A blind uncle is better than no uncle," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. When Rāmeśvara mentioned that the artists would have many technical questions, Prabhupāda agreed to make time to answer them. He also agreed that photographs of Indian holy places connected with Caitanya *līlā* could be used to supplement the paintings.

After their meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda, Rāmeśvara and Rādhāvallabha felt that they had a chance. They left Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, running down the stairs. The marathon was on.

CHAPTER TWO

Preaching to America: Part I

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda had said he would stay in Los Angeles, he soon decided to follow his original travel plans. Feeling compelled to see to the welfare of his disciples around the country, he left on a tour of thirteen ISKCON centers in the U.S. and Canada. About half a dozen of his *sannyāst* disciples traveled with him.

Denver

June 27, 1975

Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleasantly surprised to see the brick church building that was now a Kṛṣṇa temple. The temple hall was spacious, and afternoon sunshine streamed into the room. He beheld the small golden forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the altar and then walked to the rear of the hall, where he sat on the *vyāsāsana*, allowing the devotees to bathe his feet. These devotees, unaccustomed to being with their spiritual master, were awkward in performing the standard formalities. But they were enthusiastic and happy.

Sitting on the floor before Śrīla Prabhupāda, Daśaratha began singing *O he vaiṣṇava śhākura*, accompanying himself on the harmonium. Śrīla Prabhupāda liked his singing and, when the song was finished, asked, "You know the meaning?"

Daśaratha replied, "'O venerable Vaiṣṇava, O ocean of mercy, please be merciful unto your servant.'"

Another devotee added, "'I pray for the shade of your lotus feet.'"

"Yes," Prabhupāda acknowledged, and he began to speak about the song's author, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura. He then quoted another song by Narottama dāsa, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*. This Kṛṣṇ

consciousness movement is for *nistara*, he said “*Nistara* means to be liberated from the capture of *maya*. When we hear songs by the Vaiṣṇavas, that is called liberation”

Although the devotees had heard before of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and of liberation, they listened especially attentively now. Here was the Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura in person, come to teach them to control their passions, to impart to them the strength to carry out the *sankīrtana* movement, and to bless them, as Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura described, “with one drop of faith with which to attain the great treasure of the holy name”

“So I am very glad to see this temple,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said to the group of about forty devotees. “You have purchased it? That’s nice. Very good space. And the devotees here are very nice. So, our process is very simple—that we dedicate our life to the service of the Vaiṣṇava, and according to his direction, we engage in *śravanam kīrtanam*, hearing and chanting of Viṣṇu. And refrain from the sinful activities. Then life is successful. We do not require to be very learned or very rich man or to take birth in very high family”

For driving Śrīla Prabhupāda to the park, a friend of the Denver temple had lent his Lincoln Continental, formerly Richard Nixon’s presidential limousine. Brahmānanda Swamī pointed out the car’s luxurious features to Prabhupāda, including bulletproof glass windows.

“So bullet is expected also?” Prabhupāda laughed.

Brahmānanda remarked that the world leaders were always in anxiety. Prabhupāda agreed—in the material world there was danger at every step.

He began talking of Indian politics. Indira Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan in bitter disagreement. “Both of them are in distressed position,” Prabhupāda said. “I am thinking of writing them on the basis of our *Bhagavad-gītā*. Do you think it is advised?” When Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned that Indira Gandhi occasionally went to see her *guru*, Ānandamayī, Brahmānanda remarked that her *guru* had commented favorably about the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

“So, what do you think?” Prabhupāda asked his *sannyasīs*, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, Bhavānanda, and Satsvarūpa. “Shall I write? Hmmm? I have made a draft of a letter this night. So you come and see. Let us take a chance. We want good for everyone, and this is the only medicine, Hare Kṛṣṇa, for all wrongs. *Para-duḥkha-duḥkhi*. People are suffering”

The devotees agreed the letters would be a good idea, although they doubted whether the politicians would take the advice or even read such letters.

Prabhupāda then asked about the public's response to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Denver.

"They get nice attendance on Sundays," Satsvarūpa answered. "Many people come."

"There is good hope," Prabhupāda affirmed.

"Good book distribution here, too."

Prabhupāda nodded. "That is the most successful. Wherever book distribution is going on nicely, that is successful. Because people are in gross ignorance, they are taking this temporary life as everything. Very horrible condition. We are trying to explain what is the actual life."

They arrived at the park, which was filled with tall old pines, maples, and oaks. Getting out of the car, Prabhupāda stood facing a pond. In the distance he could see the Denver skyline and the Rocky Mountains. He could hear the quacking of ducks and geese from the pond.

A second carload of devotees arrived, and Prabhupāda and his followers began walking along a paved path beside the lake. "Very nice park," Prabhupāda remarked, "and not far away."

They soon came upon a large modern building, the Museum of Natural History. "That means Darwin's theory, that's all," said Prabhupāda. "Their whole civilization is based on this Darwin's theory. How long you shall keep history? Do you know what is the history of the sun, when it was created, when it came into appearance? Can Darwin give us the history of the sun, or the moon, or the sky? Where is the history? There *is* history, but where is your history? You simply imagine, 'There was a chunk, and it became manifested as the sun, moon. And I am also this.' What do you actually know? How has this cosmic manifestation come into existence?"

The sun rose with dazzling, golden rays and quickly warmed the air. The devotees offered Prabhupāda information about Denver, "the mile-high city." It was good for health, they said. Prabhupāda said the climate was as in Punjab, the upcountry in India. He also heard how Colorado was known as "cow country," because its main industry was slaughter.

Prabhupāda walked past a zoo and down a hill. He passed a Civil War cannon and saw many colorful flower beds, expansive lawns, and everywhere the tall pines. Although the air seemed chilly for July, the brightness of the rising sun was unusual, and the natural scenery of the park stood

out sharply. Śrīla Prabhupāda also appeared bathed in golden light as he walked briskly, wrapped in his gray *cādar*, talking from time to time with his disciples.

Prabhupāda mentioned Gopal Agarwal, the man at whose home he had first stayed after arriving in America in 1965. Gopal's father, he said, was a very rich man in Mathurā, and Gopal had come to America to be an electrical engineer. He was not doing as well as he would have by staying in India, Prabhupāda said. Gopal's wife, Sally, used to say, "My husband is a lost child of his parents."

"People are working so hard day and night for these temporary years," Prabhupāda said, "although by laboring less than that, they can go back to Godhead. Just to get a nice car, a nice wife, and a few children by working so hard. And by the same labor, if he devotes himself to Kṛṣṇa consciousness then he goes back home, back to Godhead. And what is wrong there? We have got so many Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees. What is wrong there, compared to these ordinary *karmīs*? Hmm? Are you unhappy? What do you think? All their efforts will be finished, and after death they will become a cat or a dog or a tree."

Devotee: "Sometimes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, even if we explain this and the people seem to understand, still they won't do anything about it."

Prabhupāda: "So you have to constantly poke them. Just like when a man is sleeping, you have to call him constantly, 'Mr. John! Mr. John! Wake up, you rascal! Why are you sleeping? You have got this opportunity of human form of life. Now get up! Take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and solve all your problems.'"

Devotee: "Some people say that if we want to do this it's all right, but we shouldn't preach and insist to them. Everyone has his own way."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "But you are a human being. You rascal, you are sleeping! And we are just trying to awaken you. Suppose a child was going off to one side where there is danger. We are human beings, so we shall say, 'No, no, go to the right.' We shall try to save him. That is our business, to do good to others. That is the mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Not that, 'This man is going to hell, so let him go to hell. But at least I am happy.' That is not humane."

Devotee: "A lot of times, Śrīla Prabhupāda, they feel we're just escaping material life. They say we don't have jobs and that we should work for a living."

Prabhupāda (addressing an imaginary challenger): "You rascal! You have no money—you work. But we are rich men. We are Kṛṣṇa's sons.

So why shall I work like you, an ass? An ass will work unnecessarily. We are not asses."

Bhagavad-gītā, Prabhupāda said, establishes Lord Kṛṣṇa as the proprietor of everything. The servants of Kṛṣṇa, therefore, should not be expected to work hard like asses. Asses work hard, not human beings. This was also the instruction of Rṣabhadeva in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Rṣabhadeva told his sons that human life is not meant for working hard simply for food and sex enjoyment. That was the business of hogs.

Prabhupāda: "Tell them they are working like hogs, and we are living like human beings. That is the difference. If somebody does not work hard like a hog, does that mean he is escaping?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to vigorously develop his theme. He argued very seriously and yet in a delightful way, showing the fortune of one who becomes a servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The devotees could not refrain from smiling and laughing as they hurried to keep up with his pace and with his Kṛṣṇa conscious logic.

Prabhupāda: "I was a student of economics. There we learned Marshall's theory. He says that human nature is such that unless a person has obligation, he will not work. That is the beginning of economics. If one already has something sufficient to eat, then he will not work. So if we have sufficient to eat, why shall we work? What is the answer? This is not escaping, it is coming to the light. To not work and yet get our necessities is comfort. But to work hard just to get the bare necessities of life, that is for the hogs and dogs."

Devotee: "They have no faith or trust that this can be done."

Prabhupāda: "See us, you rascal! See! Open your eyes! See that we have no business. We have no food stock. Still we are not worried. We do not know what we shall eat in the evening, but still we are not worried. I came to your country without any subsistence." Prabhupāda argued that man's economic necessities could be easily settled by keeping cows and land. He said that men have made an unnecessary, complex arrangement just for maintaining the body, thereby forgetting the purpose of human life. When a devotee contended that not everyone had the opportunity to get land, Prabhupāda said that this was simply mismanagement. There was plenty of land in America.

Devotee: "Śrīla Prabhupāda, they accuse us of being parasites."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "No. A parasite means if he takes others' property and tries to enjoy it. But we are not enjoying others' property. We are enjoying our father's property. *Isārāyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. Kṛṣṇa is the

proprietor Why do you say parasite? We are good children of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa says, 'Don't work. I shall give you everything' Actually Kṛṣṇa says that 'Why are you working so hard? Just surrender to Me and I will give you protection—whatever you want' So we are giving everything Why say parasite?"

The devotees were well aware that Śrīla Prabhupāda *did* work, traveling constantly, managing his worldwide Kṛṣṇa conscious society, rising in the middle of the night to translate *Śrīmad Bhagavatam*. And his disciples also worked hard. But they did not work like animals and animal like persons for things that would be destroyed in time, and they did not work at horrible enterprises that ruined the best part of human nature. They did not work like asses and claim they had no time left in the day to chant the holy name of God.

Prabhupāda "Now this is a nice park, but nobody is coming here. We Kṛṣṇa conscious people, we are taking advantage. So *they* are escaping or *we* are escaping? Just see how foolish they are. They work so hard, but they are not taking advantage. But we are taking. So our policy is that you work hard, and we go and take from you. This is not escaping, this is intelligence."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's example was a delightful revelation to the devotees, and they laughed at the obvious truth. Here they were, walking so pleasantly with their spiritual master, and yet no one else was coming to enjoy the park.

Prabhupāda "But as soon as we ask, 'You also come and join,' they will not. They say, 'No, we shall work like this.' We are asking everyone, 'Come here,' but they will not come. That is their enviousness. Therefore they say we are escaping and living at the cost of others. They see that we have got so many cars and the devotees' faces are bright. We are eating nicely and have no problems. But if we ask them to come, then it is very difficult. If we ask them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and dance, oh, it is a very big, heavy task for them. As soon as they will come, they will know that there is no tea, no liquor, no meat, no cigarette. So you can say that we are escaping these things. But we are not escaping happiness. They are escaping happiness."

When Śrīla Prabhupāda did not have a specific engagement in Denver, a few of his men sometimes gathered in his room. Occasionally he would provoke some of them into a mock debate with him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda "Everything must come from something. No one

can deny that. Now we give our challenge: Do you know what that Absolute Truth is?"

Brahmānanda: "We know there is an Absolute Truth, but at this time we cannot directly say what it is."

Prabhupāda immediately replied that if a person admits not knowing the Absolute Truth, then that person has no grounds for rejecting the Vedic explanation of the Absolute. That person cannot deny Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth. "If you don't know the philosophy," Prabhupāda said, "then you must agree to hear from an authority who does."

Satsvarūpa: "Yes, that argument is logical, and we should at least listen to you. But we have heard so many versions of the truth. Why should we accept your version?"

Prabhupāda: "That is like saying, 'I have come across so many counterfeit coins. Why should I think there are real coins?' There are counterfeit coins, and there must also be genuine coins. It is our misfortune if we are unable to distinguish the real coins from the counterfeit coins."

Another *sannyāsī* challenged that the Kṛṣṇa conscious version was dogmatic, since there were many truths and many gods. But the Absolute Truth is one, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, because God is one. God has no competitors. If a person does not accept Kṛṣṇa as God, then he has to present someone who is more fully God than Kṛṣṇa. But if someone does not know who is God, then that person cannot deny Kṛṣṇa.

"If you speak that way," Prabhupāda continued, "then *you* are being dogmatic. You do not know what God is, yet dogmatically you are saying that Kṛṣṇa is not God."

Prabhupāda compared those who deny the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa to owls who do not open their eyes to see the sunlight. Such persons demand to see God, but when God comes before them personally or when He sends His pure representative, they will not see.

On another morning walk in Denver, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami told Prabhupāda that some of the devotees were reading books about health diets and were avoiding the *prasādam* offered to the Deity in the temple. Śrīla Prabhupāda immediately replied that this was not good. Fasting, he acknowledged, was good for health, but the devotees should not become weak. They should take *prasādam* and do their work.

When one of the devotees told Prabhupāda he got drowsy after eating heavily of grains and therefore preferred fruit, Prabhupāda said that was all right; fruit was offered to the Deity. When Yaduhara said that in Los

Angeles the families often cooked in their own homes instead of taking the *prasādam* of the Deity, Bhavānanda Goswami testified how wonderful it was at the Māyāpur festival when hundreds of devotees sat down and took *prasādam* together.

Prabhupāda: "Yes, what is the difficulty? *Capāṭṭis*, rice, they are innocent foods. What is the difficulty?"

Harikeśa: "A lot of devotees are quoting you. They say there is no need to eat grains and that you said that grains were for the animals."

Prabhupāda: "But I am eating grains."

Harikeśa: "I tell them that."

Prabhupāda: "They say, 'Prabhupāda says.' Then you believe that."

Prabhupāda said that devotees should not listen to health advice if it resulted in their refusing to honor the Lord's *prasādam*.

Prabhupāda: "Therefore, follow taking *prasādam*. Let whatever may happen."

Tamala Kṛṣṇa: "Let us die eating *prasādam*."

Prabhupāda: "Yes. [Laughter.] That is devotee. But we must prepare very first class foodstuffs. And then, where is the complaint, if it is first class?"

Returning from the walk, Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to discuss the topic in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class: "I was hearing that we are not taking *prasādam*—especially the *grhasthas*. No. That is not good. You should take *prasādam*." Prabhupāda described how *bhakti-yoga* begins with controlling the tongue—by chanting and by eating *kṛṣṇa prasādam*.

"So in our branches," he continued, "all the devotees take *prasādam* together. That is nice. Why we should not be liking to take *prasādam* in the temple? What is the fault? No, this is not good. Everyone should take *prasādam*. . . . It is called *prasāda-sevā* [service], not *prasādam* enjoyment. *Prasādam* means giving service. *Prasādam* is as good as Kṛṣṇa and should be respected as good as Kṛṣṇa. So one must have faith that it is not material. Those who are attached to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and are attached to the service, they should take *prasādam*—first-class *prasādam*. Everyone likes the taste of *prasādam*."

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July 2, 1975

On the plane from Denver to Chicago, Prabhupāda scanned a *Time* magazine essay on crime, a cover story entitled, "Crime: Why and What

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To Do?" Landing at O'Hare Airport, he was greeted by hundreds of cheering devotees and the press

"Your Divine Grace," Śrī Govinda, the Chicago temple president, said, pushing forward, "this is Ms Jones from NBC television"

"How do you do?" smiled Ms Jones, and several other reporters held microphones before Prabhupada "I would like to know what the occasion is Why are you visiting Chicago?"

"Just now I have seen one article in *Time* magazine," Śrīla Prabhupada replied He raised his right hand in an instructing gesture and leaned against the cane he held in his left hand "It was four or five pages," he continued— "Crime Why and How to Solve It" If you are serious, then you can take our method and suggestions Then you can stop this crime"

"You have a way to stop the crime?"

"Oh, yes, I have"

"Can you explain a little bit more how you do it?"

Śrīla Prabhupada nodded "That we have to suggest The social, political, educational, cultural—everything has to be changed So if you come, we can give you in details how it can be done"

Ms Jones dropped the issue and asked Prabhupada how he felt about his welcome She seemed unnerved by the devotees crowding around to see and hear Śrīla Prabhupada

"By God's grace," Śrīla Prabhupada said, "wherever I go they welcome me like that"

Ms Jones "Are you used to anything a bit more serene?"

"Serene?" Prabhupada thoughtfully considered the word as they all stood together in the midst of the noisy, heavily trafficked airport "Of course, our whole propaganda is serene," he said "Yes We are distributing God consciousness It is the most serene movement People have to learn it very nicely"

"Thank you," said Ms Jones She had gotten enough

But Prabhupada added a last word "My message is to stop the crimes of your country This is my sum and substance. You have read the article in *Time* magazine, 'Crime and How to Stop It' So if you take my advice, that can be stopped"

"The world is simply full of criminals," Prabhupada continued, seated in the back seat of the car as they pulled away from the airport's entrance. "Crime means *pāpī*, sinful" To Śrīla Prabhupada it seemed to make no difference that he was sitting in a car with a few disciples and not speaking

with the press "If simply by law you want to suppress them, it will not be successful Deliver them Then you also come along with them Not that these criminals only should be delivered, and you will go on continuing with criminal activities, slaughterhouse and killing the child in the womb You are criminal yourself The whole state."

Śrīla Prabhupāda sat waiting for his massage to begin His regular daily schedule was to take a massage at 11 30 A M, before bathing and taking *prasadam* But today, because of his plane travel, his routine was interrupted Nevertheless, he wanted to follow his general program as far as possible. Upendra was getting mustard oil and the mat for Śrīla Prabhupāda to sit on

"So we can solve this," Prabhupāda said to the few disciples with him "Why not invite them to hear us, how we can solve? We can arrange big, big meetings on this point 'Crime Why and What To Do?' A very suitable headline it is"

Prabhupāda continued to develop a Kṛṣṇa conscious analysis of crime As long as society violates the laws of nature, he said, there must be crime He thought it significant that, according to the *Time* article, the leaders of the country were actually wondering what to do about the increasing crime rate and that they were admitting they didn't know the solution "Now," he said, "our business is to give the solution to these leaders, if they actually want the welfare of the country"

All the problems could be solved by Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Prabhupāda had often said, and now he was eager to tackle the particular problem of crime America's leaders were admitting their bewilderment, and if they were actually sincere, then they might accept the Kṛṣṇa conscious solution Prabhupāda was keen to preach to the government leaders, Kṛṣṇa consciousness was meant especially for them *Bhagavad gītā* stated that the *rājārjās* or saintly kings, should disseminate the teachings of the *Gītā* to the citizens But were the leaders actually serious? Śrīla Prabhupāda wondered He was serious, and he anticipated the special opportunity that might arise here in Chicago to preach to the leaders about ending crime

While sitting with a group of disciples in his room, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for a particular *Bhāgavatam* verse to be read, and he gave the opening Sanskrit, *kāmaśya nendriya prītih*

Harikesa read, "A completely bewildered material civilization is wrongly directed toward the fulfillment of desires in sense gratification In such

civilization, in all spheres of life, the ultimate end is sense gratification. In politics, social service, altruism, philanthropy and ultimately in religion or even in salvation, the very same tint of sense gratification is ever increasingly predominant. In the political field leaders of men fight with one another to fulfill their personal sense gratification."

Śrīla Prabhupada interrupted, "Now in India this is happening. All these things are foreseen. I have already discussed all this in the purport. Then?"

Harikesa continued reading: "The voters adore the so-called leaders only when they promise sense gratification. As soon as the voters are dissatisfied in their own sense satisfaction, they dethrone the leaders. The leaders must always dissatisfy the voters by not satisfying their senses."

Again Prabhupada interrupted: "There are protest meetings and processions, but nobody will be able to satisfy them, because they do not know how to keep the mass of people satisfied. These rascals, they do not know. I have always said they are rascals. Now they ask, 'What to do?' They will face so many problems. 'What to do?'—this is the beginning. The whole world will be in chaos if they do not take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So many 'What to do?' will come. Just tell them that here is the remedy. Now it is the time for preaching. They are thinking. They are sleeping, but now they are thinking what to do. They are blindly following sense gratification, and now it has come to the stage of what to do."

"This is the opportunity for preaching. We are the only persons who can give solution. There is no other group or any man in the world. We are only. So let them take advantage of our knowledge and apply. Now all the *sannyasis* have got the good opportunity to preach."

The ISKCON temple was in the Chicago suburb of Evanston, and on July 4, the day after Prabhupāda's arrival, Edgar Vaneman Jr., the mayor of Evanston, came to visit Prabhupada in his apartment.

Immediately Prabhupada referred to the *Time* news article on crime. "The remedy," he said, "is to train first class men." He told the mayor briefly of the Vedic society's four natural divisions, pointing out that society had become so degraded that everyone is in the fourth class, the lowest class—and sinking. The only hope was to train some first class and second class men.

"We certainly need a new approach," admitted Mayor Vancman, "because we're not being successful now."

After less than half an hour's conversation, Śrīla Prabhupāda was ready to make a bold request. Previously Jagadīśa, the G.B.C. secretary for Chicago, had mentioned that a very large municipally-owned building across the street was vacant. Śrīla Prabhupāda decided to ask the mayor to donate it. Already he had explained to the mayor that Kṛṣṇa consciousness could stop crime and drug addiction, and he now asked Harikeśa to read a letter by Dr. Stillson Judah, author of *Hare Krishna and the Counterculture*. In the letter Dr. Judah appreciated Kṛṣṇa consciousness for "transforming lives from drug-addicted hippies to loving servants of Kṛṣṇa and humanity."

"So we can stop this, provided we are given the facility to work on," said Prabhupāda. When the mayor replied yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda made his request.

"So I was thinking," Prabhupāda said, "just in front of here there is a very nice house, Merrywood, a big house. You have knowledge about this house?"

The mayor replied that this building was to be the new city hall of Evanston. Śrīla Prabhupāda had not been told about this, and he hesitated, while the mayor spoke of how the city's offices, scattered for so long in nine different locations, could now all be together in this one building.

"But this is more important," Prabhupāda said. "City service is going on, but criminals are increasing. So why not give us a little opportunity?"

Mayor Vaneman explained politely that he would have to talk with the city manager, tactfully excusing himself from commitment.

"If we get a good place," Prabhupāda continued, "with the cooperation of the authorities, then our simple program is, as Professor Judah has remarked, to turn drug-addicted hippies into devotees. We shall invite everyone to come and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and take prasādam. I began this movement in New York, alone. And these boys gradually came to me. But my process was this: chanting and giving them prasādam. Everyone will be glad to accept it. They will read these books. These devotees here are practical examples. I am a poor Indian. I did not bribe them, neither have I any money." Prabhupāda laughed. "So now they have dedicated their lives for this purpose. So I want to do it on a large scale."

But there were practical alternatives. Perhaps, Prabhupāda suggested, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement could use part of the building for a year. He continued describing the efficacy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But the mayor had little else to say. Prabhupāda had prasādam brought in

and asked his guest if he had any further inquiry.

"No, I really don't think I do," Mayor Vaneman replied, "but I think I'd like to learn more about your movement. And I have enjoyed talking and listening to you, and I appreciate it."

After the mayor left, one of Prabhupāda's disciples questioned why they would want such a big building. The Chicago temple was large and not at all crowded.

"My idea is," Prabhupāda said, "I want to draw the attention of the authorities. If they cooperate, then we can push on our movement more vigorously."

"But with our present location here, we cannot?" a devotee asked.

"We are doing it on a small scale," Prabhupāda explained. "It is going on. But if we get support from the authorities, we can push on in a larger scale."

Lieutenant David Mozee, public relations representative of the Chicago police department, was interested in Śrīla Prabhupāda's idea for stopping crime, and Śrīla Prabhupāda offered his simple proposal. The government should give ISKCON a large building, where the devotees could regularly hold mass *kīrtanas* and distribute *prasādam*, and gradually people would become purified. Lieutenant Mozee, like Mayor Vaneman was respectful and interested.

"Unless you clean the heart," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "you cannot stop criminality simply by laws. The laws are already known by the thief and murderer, but still they commit, because the heart is unclean. And our process is to cleanse the heart."

"A very difficult task, sir," said Lieutenant Mozee.

Prabhupāda replied that it *wasn't* difficult; he was already doing it on a small scale. "They are faced with the problem 'Why crime and what to do?' " he said, "and we are giving the answer. So you take advantage of it. Why crime? We are saying because they are godless. And what to do? Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and take *prasādam*. Now if you like you can take. Otherwise we are doing our own business. Just like a poor medical man—he is also giving medicine. But if he is given facility, he can open a big hospital. That is our proposition. We are already doing that business, but if we get facility from the authorities then we can open a big place, a big hospital. And the problem is already big. Otherwise, why are they saying, 'What to do?' "

Illinois state assemblyman John Porter, who came with his wife, also

asked about the solution to crime, but he had a more direct, personal interest in spiritual life. Was it possible, he asked, to make spiritual advancement without living in the temple? Śrīla Prabhupāda told him yes, if he chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, which he could do anywhere. And he should read the standard books of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Mr. Porter also inquired about the Kṛṣṇa conscious understanding of certain Christian theological points, such as original sin and salvation. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, did not indulge in discussing theoretical or comparative religion but emphasized the necessity of strictly following the instructions given by God or His representative. "The main business," Prabhupāda said, "is to understand God."

Mr. Porter seemed unlikely to help the devotees get a large building, but he had inquired humbly about spiritual life. Prabhupāda's unstinting deliverance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was not conditional. If anyone sincerely inquired, be he assemblyman or criminal, Śrīla Prabhupāda was always eager to give him the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Chicago visit included several important functions at the temple. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Viṣṇujana Swami had come to Chicago to see Śrīla Prabhupāda and to recommend for initiation seventy-five new men who had joined their Rādhā-Dāmodara traveling *saṅkīrtana* party. And at the end of the week Prabhupāda would be attending a Ratha-yātrā procession in downtown Chicago.

Each morning he lectured in the large hall at the Evanston temple before several hundred devotees, speaking about the life of Ajāmila. Each day he would tell more of the history of the sinner Ajāmila, who was saved at the time of death by calling out the name of God, Nārāyaṇa. On the fourth morning Prabhupāda was explaining how Ajāmila had named one of his sons Nārāyaṇa.

"So the idea is that by God's grace, in the beginning of his life Ajāmila engaged himself to be Kṛṣṇa conscious and was initiated. Then years later Kṛṣṇa gave him the advice, 'All right, you keep this youngest son's name Nārāyaṇa. Because you'll be naturally attached to this body, and you will call him, "Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa, please come here. Nārāyaṇa, take your food. Nārāyaṇa, take your drink." So you will chant Nārāyaṇa.' "

Śrīla Prabhupāda suddenly became stunned, unable to speak. Such a thing had happened before, but rarely. He remained in trance, while a pregnant silence held the room. The devotees could see that Prabhupāda

was experiencing a powerful spiritual emotion. Many of them felt that when he had called out "Narayana," he had come face to face with Narayana, he was seeing Kṛṣṇa, who was showing how very pleased He was with His pure devotee.

Surely Kṛṣṇa *was* very pleased with Prabhupāda, and although Prabhupāda was fully engaged with the details of his movement within the material world, Kṛṣṇa *was* with him, giving him assurance from the spiritual world. For the devotees this moment confirmed the existence of the spiritual world and confirmed that Prabhupāda belonged to that world and was only visiting the material world to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Most of the devotees were neophytes, still attached to the material and having little vision of the spiritual. But now they could see the spiritual world through Śrīla Prabhupāda's ecstatic trance.

After about a minute, Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to external consciousness. "All right," he said. And then, with the same words he used to end all his lectures, he said, "Thank you very much." Then devotees began a rousing, melodic *kīrtana*. It had been a special moment, and they kept it in their hearts.

Śrīla Prabhupāda held a press conference at the Sheraton Chicago, and the turnout by TV and the press was good. Sitting on a cushion on a platform, surrounded by his *sannyāsīs*, Prabhupāda lectured to a group of media people, who sat patiently. He introduced his topic as "Talking about the spiritual existence of the living being," and described the unavoidable miseries of the material world and how to transcend them by learning to love God and thus return to the eternal, spiritual world. Those persons endeavoring to attain this spiritual goal are first class men, he said, and he described the four natural social divisions. On concluding, he called for questions.

A reporter challenged that the four divisions of society were contrary to everything in American tradition, but Śrīla Prabhupāda replied that only training was required. America was training doctors, engineers, lawyers, and America could train some first class men.

Woman reporter- "Where do women fit into this social structure? You keep referring to a man."

Prabhupāda replied that a woman was a man's (her husband's) assistant. If a woman was faithful to a first-class man (a *brāhmaṇa*), then she also became first class. If she was married to a second-class man (a *kṣātrīya*),

then she would be considered second class. If she was married to a third-class man (a *vaiśya*), then she was third class. According to the status of her husband, she became first, second, third, or fourth.

Woman reporter: "You mean she's not qualified as first, second, or third-class until she's married?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Yes, a woman requires protection. In childhood she should be protected by the father, in youth by the husband, and in old age by the elderly sons."

The same reporter asked if Prabhupāda thought Indira Gandhi was having political trouble because she was a woman and therefore incapable.

"Why are you trying to put me in the emergency law?" Prabhupāda laughed. He then quoted Cāṇakya Paṇḍita: "Never trust a woman or a politician."

Prabhupāda had created a sensation, and within a few hours Chicago's radio and TV stations were talking of the news conference, concentrating almost entirely on his comments about women. A woman alderman, scheduled to visit Prabhupāda, phoned to say that she was cancelling because of Śrīla Prabhupāda's expressed attitudes toward women. A TV station phoned and requested to come over that evening to do an interview.

While the Chicago news reporters wrote their stories for the evening and morning editions, Prabhupāda's comments were further picked up by United Press International and Associated Press wire services. Śrīla Prabhupāda had wanted to reach the public with his Kṛṣṇa conscious message, and therefore he had arrived in Chicago with the specific idea of broadcasting his solution to crime; but now he had hit on a topic that was attracting far more attention. He had had the boldness to assert, in the midst of America's predominant mood of women's liberation, woman's real place in society.

The devotees were excited by the controversy and were eager to understand the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy more deeply and to present it exactly.

They complained that none of the reporters had delved deeply or allowed Prabhupāda to express his ideas of spiritual equality, yet when Prabhupāda heard that evening that he had touched off so much media response, he was amused. He was ready to tell them more.

"Why only the woman should become pregnant?" he said, reiterating his point before the small group of devotees in his room. "The man goes away, and she has to take care of the children and beg from the government. Is that independence?"

Devotee: "Then the independence has become contraception. They say, 'I do not want to have the child.'"

Prabhupāda: "That means you commit another sinful activity. You will be punished."

Devotee: "Śrīla Prabhupāda, the whole civilization, American Western civilization, is now bewildered by this theory of women's liberation."

Prabhupāda: "But how they will be liberated? On this point first of all let me know. Anyway, I am not speaking of my experience. When we speak, we speak from the *śāstra*. Women's dependence is described in *Manu-saṁhitā*. Just like Queen Kuntī—she is not an ordinary woman. She was learned and exalted."

Brahmānanda Swami: "This is one point. In our devotional line there are spiritual leaders who have been women, such as Kuntī."

Prabhupāda: "Therefore I say that Kuntī remained dependent on her sons. That is my proposition. Her sons were banished. But when they went to the forest she followed, because she thought, 'I am a widow. I am dependent on my sons. So wherever they remain, I shall remain.' Similarly Sītā, the wife of Lord Rāmacandra. Lord Rāmacandra was requested by His father to go to the forest, not Sītā. But she preferred to go with her husband. When her husband said, 'You are not banished. You stay at home,' she said, 'No. I am dependent on You. Wherever You shall go, I must go.' This is Vedic culture."

Devotee: "Her chastity was her great virtue. But nowadays that is no longer true."

Prabhupāda: "Nowadays may be different, but I am speaking the Vedic idea. That's all. In all circumstances, unless her husband is crazy or something like that—mad—in every case, the wife is faithful and subservient to the husband. Even the husband goes out of home, *vānaprastha*, the wife also goes with him. When he takes *sannyāsa*, at that time there is no accompanying of wife. Otherwise, in *gṛhastha* life and even *vānaprastha* life, the wife is the constant companion and subservient. Gandhārī—her husband was blind. So when the marriage settlement was done, she was not blind, but she voluntarily became blind by wrapping cloth over her eyes. There are instances in the Vedic literature. The wife remains always faithful and subservient to the husband. That is her perfection. The Americans may not like this idea, but that is a different thing."

A five-person TV crew arrived at Prabhupāda's apartment—four women and a male assistant. Obviously they were making a point. While the crew set up their lights and equipment, Prabhupāda sat serenely behind his

low desk, a few of his disciples sitting before him on the floor.

The interviewer first asked Prabhupāda about his solutions to America's problems. Comparing society to the human body, Prabhupāda replied that while all parts of the body were important, the head was the most important. Without a properly functioning head, the person (or society) was mad. There was need, therefore, for training first-class men.

"Where do women fit into these four classes?" the newswoman asked. Śrīla Prabhupāda duly repeated that woman, being subordinate to man, had her position according to the position of her husband.

And so it went. The questions were challenges—"Do you think I'm inferior to you?" The interviewer was out to make Prabhupāda appear prejudiced, but he spoke only pure philosophy.

"Spiritually they are all one," Prabhupāda said. Yet he emphasized a distinction, materially, between man and woman. "For example," he said, "women can bear children, but the man cannot. Is it possible for the man to become pregnant?"

Interviewer: "What happens when women are not subordinate to men?"

Prabhupāda: "Then there is disruption, social disruption. Therefore in the Western countries there are so many divorce cases, because the woman does not agree to become subordinate to man."

Interviewer: "What advice do you have to women who do not want to become subordinate to men?"

Prabhupāda: "It is not my advice, but it is the advice of the Vedic knowledge that woman should be chaste and faithful to man."

Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to the point that women bear children but men cannot. "By nature's way," he said, "as soon as you get children you require support from the husband. Otherwise you are in difficulty."

Interviewer: "Many woman have children and have no support from their husbands. They have no husband."

Prabhupāda: "Then they have to take support from others. You cannot deny that. The government is giving you support. But the government is embarrassed. If the husband supports the wife and children, the government is relieved of so much welfare contribution. So that is a problem. Man and woman unite. The woman becomes pregnant, and the husband goes away. Then the poor woman is embarrassed with the child. She has to beg from the government. So do you think it is a very nice thing? The Vedic idea is that woman should be married to a man and the man should take charge of the woman and the children so that they do not become a burden to the government or to the public."

Interviewer "What about women who do not have children?"

Prabhupada "Well, that is another unnatural thing. Sometimes they use contraceptives. They kill children—abortion. That is also not very good. These are all sinful activities. One has to suffer for them."

It was a heated interview—the feminist interviewer set on disparaging Prabhupada for his outrageous remarks. Yet he remained strong and uncompromising, arguing in such a way as to point out many anomalies of materialistic civilization.

Prabhupada didn't discriminate against women as a class and in fact gave women in his Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement the same opportunity as men. Although the reporter misunderstood him, labeling him as a male chauvinist, actually he was compassionate. According to the Vedic view, women should be protected from exploitative men. Prabhupada was aware that his words were not being appreciated, but he continued, hopeful that the truth would prevail and that intelligent people would understand. The important point was liberation, not temporary social or sexist stances.

After the TV crew left, Prabhupada continued the discussion. He said that their becoming angry showed their defeat. They were unwilling to accept logic.

Prabhupada "This women's liberation is not successful. It has caused disaster. When the women become dependent on the welfare gift of the government, then the government has to raise taxes heavily for this purpose. If they think it is not a problem, then what can be said? By nature's way, if the husband takes care of the wife and children, this problem is solved immediately. But the man takes advantage and goes away after making the woman pregnant. And the woman is embarrassed, and the government is embarrassed."

Devotee "And the child grows up to be a criminal!"

Prabhupada "Yes, that is another problem. So they are not far seeing. Therefore we have to take advice from Kṛṣṇa. We are spreading this knowledge that you take your counsel from Kṛṣṇa, then you will be happy."

Satsvarūpa "Śrīla Prabhupada, if we speak these things on television and the newspapers and people become angry, if all the people become angry like she just did, is it still good propaganda for us?"

Prabhupada "No. Then we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā* everything is discussed—*varṇa saṅghāra* and the first class man, the second class man. If you have to push on the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, then we have to discuss. But if they do not like, better to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Don't discuss anything. If you are not agreeable to hear from

Bhagavad gītā, then let us chant together Hare Kṛṣṇa—that's all. But these things are discussed in the *Bhagavad gītā*. There it is said that when there is unwanted population and it is increased, then it becomes hell. So if you want to increase the hellish persons, then don't discuss. But if you think it is a problem, then discuss."

Satsvarūpa: "As *brāhmaṇas* we have to be truthful. In Hong Kong they asked you what you thought of that *guru* who says he is God. You said you could not help yourself, and you spoke out."

Prabhupāda: "Yes, I said he is a great cheat. What can I say? And now it has been proven. As I said in my book *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, this moon excursion is childish, and that has also been proven now. Now they don't talk about the moon excursion. Because they are a failure."

The next morning Śrīla Prabhupāda rode to Loyola Park for his morning walk. On the way, one of the devotees read aloud the news article from that morning's edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. "Forgive me if this story is not well written," the article began. "I am a woman." The article continued:

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the 77-year-old founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, said so Wednesday. The Society is dedicated to peace in the world through love of God and relinquishment of all things material. The Swami spoke seated cross-legged on an expensive looking cushion, surrounded by fresh flowers, microphones, and burning incense in the conference room he rented at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel. He is in town for a Krishna parade at 1.30 PM Saturday down State Street in which he will ride on a flower bedecked float. Then he will fly to Philadelphia for more celebration and philosophical chats. He looked occasionally at his gold watch as he explained his life philosophy. His adoring disciples, five men, knelt at his side.

The article continued, implying that Śrīla Prabhupāda was a male chauvinist. "He said women do not figure in his class system except as daughters or wives. An unmarried woman is presumably classless."

Śrīla Prabhupāda chuckled in the back seat of the car and remarked, "That is a fact. She is prostitute, that's all. If you classify, then she is prostitute. There is no other way."

The devotee continued reading

The Swami now lives in Los Angeles, and he trains his followers there. Their income is from sales of his books, magazines, and incense. He says he has about 10,000 followers "We do not have so many," he said "It is hard to find a first class man" It's a pity, half the population are women

"So it is not bad," said Prabhupada And he offered his own positive proposal for women in Kṛṣṇa consciousness "Our policy should be that at Dallas Gurukula we shall create first class men And we shall teach the girls two things how to become chaste and faithful to their husband and how to cook nicely If they have these two qualifications, then I will take a guarantee to get them a good husband So try to do that"

At the park Prabhupada was joined by several carloads of devotees Followed closely by a dozen eager disciples, he proceeded down a path that ran among many tall shade trees along the shore of Lake Michigan Since the walkway was wide enough for only a few devotees to walk abreast, most of the devotees fanned out onto the grass, trying to keep within hearing distance of Śrīla Prabhupada

"Ordinary education is sufficient," Prabhupāda was saying "—ABCD This is nonsense—big, big education and then later on become a prostitute. To make them prostitute doesn't require education So in Dallas Gurukula there is no problem Educate the girls how to become faithful, chaste wife, how to cook nicely Let them learn varieties of cooking Is it very difficult? These two qualifications There are many stories such as of Damayanti, Pārvatī, Sītā—great women in the history Our girls should read their lives And by fifteen and sixteen years they should be married If they are qualified, it will not be difficult to find out a nice husband If a woman is chaste, even though she is not very beautiful, she will be liked by her husband So train them in that way"

Before starting back, Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped and suggested they all sit together on the grass A disciple volunteered his wool *cādar* as a seat for Prabhupāda, and the devotees all sat down, facing their spiritual master Special, unexpected occasions like this made them blissful, and the opinions of a TV news reporter or the *Chicago Tribune* seemed remote and unimportant The devotees often wished such persons could be present at times like these to see that Śrīla Prabhupāda was not at all like they thought

Śrīla Prabhupāda began discussing the proper relations between men and women. "Women and men should live separately," he said. "That is also essential. Butter and fire must be kept apart. Otherwise the butter will melt. You cannot stop it."

Devotee: "Śrīla Prabhupāda, in a purport in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you say that even fifty years ago in India the householders had separate quarters in the apartment for men and women, and the husband would not see his wife during the day. Is this the standard we should develop in our movement?"

Prabhupāda: "Yes, that is good. The example is that butter and fire should be kept as far apart as possible. Otherwise the butter will melt. The man is butter, and the woman is fire. So this is restricted, even if the man happens to be father, brother, or son. *Mātrā svasrā duhitṛā vā*. One may say that people will not think of sex impulse in the presence of a daughter, mother, or sister. But the *śāstra* says no, there is possibility. So they should not sit together. People may say this is only advice for the tenth-class rascal. But the next line of the *śāstra* says no: *vidvāmsam api karṣati*. It is not the question of the tenth-class rascal, but even first-class, learned, he may be attracted. *Balavān indriya grāmo vidvāmsam api karṣati*. The senses are so strong that they can mislead even the most learned scholar.

"Lord Brahmā was attracted to his daughter. Just see, there is the example. Lord Śiva was attracted by the Mohinī-mūrti. Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, 'Even if I see a wooden woman, I become attracted.'" Prabhupāda laughed. "He is giving this information to teach us that it is possible. So, shall we go now?"

Returning in the car, Prabhupāda asked for news of Indira Gandhi and India. Some of her policies had become highly controversial, and political opposition to her was mounting. The latest news was of her emergency rule.

"If Indira Gandhi takes my advice," Prabhupāda said, "then I can keep her on the post, and she can do greater service to India. Immediately the whole public will give her support."

"What would your advice to her be?" asked Brahmānanda Swami.

"My first step," said Prabhupāda, "will be to capture all the hoarders and distribute the grains free. Immediately the public will be obliged to her. There are immense amounts of food grains, and they are simply hoarded. They are not selling without good price. This is going on. Immediately she can win the public. Some of the hoarders should be hanged,

so that in the future nobody will hoard. People are hungry, and she says she has got some program to drive away the poverty. This is the point. If she can supply all consumer goods free to the poor for the time being, then immediately the whole population will like her. And the hoarders should be exemplarily punished. Then nobody will hoard. But to remain the leader she requires spiritual knowledge, otherwise it will be another disaster. If she wants to remain leader then she must be a spiritual person. She must become a Vaisnavi."

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Philadelphia

July 11, 1975

Prabhupāda's receptions were usually large, spontaneous turnouts. The temple population would increase greatly just before his arrival in a city, as devotees from other centers converged. Except for a handful of disciples—the woman preparing Prabhupāda's meal, the men laying down the last tiles in his room or working on the Ratha yātrā cart—everyone would go to the airport to greet him.

At the airports Śrīla Prabhupāda was accustomed to much fanfare, the rhythmic crash of hand cymbals, the beating of *mṛdangas*, and the chanting chorus of a hundred or more happy devotees. Only if they became wild or disruptive would he object. Otherwise, as Kṛṣṇa's representative, he would be pleased to see an enthusiastic reception, as he collected flowers and obeisances, like a viceroy accepting tribute on behalf of the king. By his grace, the praise and worship was going directly to Kṛṣṇa.

Thus in Philadelphia, as at almost every airport reception, Śrīla Prabhupāda felt satisfied. With loving glances he acknowledged the familiar faces of his spiritual sons and daughters. Devotees stepped forward to place flower garlands around his neck, and the reporters also stepped forward, with cameras, microphones, and notepads. They had not come to offer Prabhupāda devotional praise, and yet they also appeared to be serving him by offering him the opportunity to preach.

A woman reporter asked, "It has been said that the Kṛṣṇa conscious movement is what some people consider sexist or racist, because certain propensities for women and for blacks have been defined either by the devotees or the Vedic scriptures. I wonder if you would comment on that?"

She had spoken rapidly, and Brahmānanda Swāmī repeated for Śrīla

Prabhupāda, "She says you give inferior roles to women and Negroes."

Prabhupāda: "We give equal roles spiritually. Materially, one man is servant, one man is master. How can you avoid this? Do you think everyone will be master, no one will be servant? Materially? Materially one is father, one is son, one is master, one is servant, one is man, one is woman. How can you stop this? But spiritually they are all equal."

Here was the same new theme that had begun in Chicago, and here came the same challenges.

Reporter: "So what is happening materially is unimportant?"

Prabhupāda: "Materially there is distinction. But when you come to the spiritual platform, then when you discern the spirit soul within everything—that is equal. Like you are differently dressed in a red shirt, and I am differently dressed. This difference must be there. There are so many men and women, and they are differently dressed. You cannot say they are all equal by the dress. But within the dress, the living entities, they are the same. We make this distinction materially, but not spiritually."

"I would like to ask one question," said another reporter. "What is it that you are offering that has resulted in such an emotional response from all the people here?"

Prabhupāda: "Because they are being spiritually educated. We are above the material platform. Therefore we have no distinction that one is American, one is Indian, one is black, one is white. There is no such distinction. Everyone is servant of God. Is that all right?"

Another reporter mentioned that there were many *gurus* and asked why Prabhupāda thought his teaching was the truth.

Prabhupāda: "Because we speak the truth. We don't give bluff, saying, 'I am God.' We know the actual position—that God is great and we are all servants."

The question had been asked in the typical reporters' attitude of irreverent interrogation, but Prabhupāda was replying soberly, reflecting on his own position in relation to Kṛṣṇa. "How can I say I am God?" he asked. And he lowered his head. "No, we do not give bluff. We say the real truth. Therefore it appeals. If I say something bumbug, it may act for some time, but it will not endure."

Reporter: "Your celebration is tomorrow. Of what will that celebration consist?"

Prabhupāda: "Celebration? It is remembering Kṛṣṇa, or the Lord. He

with His brother and sister visited Kuruksetra, a place in India. So in memory of that visit, we observe this Rathayātrā."

Śrīla Prabhupāda got into the rented Cadillac limousine, along with Kīrtanānanda Swami, Brahmānanda Swami, and Rāvīndra Svarūpa, the Philadelphia temple president.

"So again the same question was raised," said Prabhupāda. "So reply was all right?"

"Yes," said Brahmānanda, "it was very nice."

Prabhupāda: "Materially there is distinction. You are differently dressed, I am differently dressed. But spiritually there is no distinction."

The chauffeur glanced to the back seat. "If you want any more air in the back, there is a control over there."

"We can put on the air conditioner, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Brahmānanda.

"Oh, all right," said Prabhupāda. "But sky condition is better." They opened the windows.

Prabhupāda recalled that he had been to Philadelphia twice before. In 1969 he had come from New York City with some devotees to lecture at Temple University. And back in 1965, after leaving Butler, Pennsylvania, he had come to the University of Pennsylvania for a meeting with Professor Norman Brown. Rāvīndra Svarūpa told how he had been a student at Temple University and had enrolled in Swami Nīkīlānanda's class a year after Śrīla Prabhupāda had spoken there.

Rāvīndra Svarūpa: "The students remembered you. They told me you had asked Swami Nīkīlānanda, 'So you are studying *Vedānta*. But what is *Vedānta*?' And no one knew. Then you said that *vedo* means 'knowledge' and *anta* means 'end,' so *Vedānta* means the end of knowledge, and that is Kṛṣṇa. They had never heard that before, even though they had so many hours of courses in *Vedānta*."

Prabhupāda: "That is the difficulty. Those who are foolish people are taking the leading part. One who has no knowledge is taking the part of a teacher. Just like this—one does not know what is *Vedānta*, and he is reading *Vedānta*. It is a very simple truth. *Vedo* means 'knowledge' and *anta* means 'end.' There must be some ultimate goal. But the modern process is that we go on unlimitedly, but we never come to the end. Is it not like that? What do you think?"

Ravindra Svarūpa: "Yes, it's a fact. No conclusion."

They passed a large junkyard filled with scrapped automobiles. "Motorcar," Prabhupāda said.

Kīrtanāoanda: "That is the end of their knowledge—a pile of junk."

Prabhupāda: "Yes. Their time is spent in breaking and building, that's all. They do not inquire, 'Why breaking and building? Why not permanent?' That question does not arise. And they cannot solve it. They think this breaking and building is the nature. But we are giving information of another nature, where there is no breaking and building—permanent. But they cannot believe that there is such a thing. We are giving that informatioo, how you can keep yourself eternal. This is the greatest gift to the human society. He wants to live eternally, but he doesn't know how to live eternally. His energy is being spoiled by the skyscraper building construction. But he is not very serious to construct his body eternal. We are speaking this in our meetings everywhere, but they have no brain to understand."

They rode around the sharply winding curves alongside the Schuylkill River. Passing Fairmont Park, the devotees pointed out to Prabhupāda that it contained a thousand acres of forest land. Prabhupāda asked Kīrtanānanda Swami how far it was to New Vrindaban, and they began talking. When Prabhupāda asked about the *grhasthas* there, Kīrtanānanda replied, "We are developing very nice householder couples at New Vrindaban. Very good families."

"That is essential," said Prabhupāda. "The peaceful life of householders, that is required."

The ISKCON center was a converted two-story house. The temple room was packed with devotees, and others filled the hallway, straining to see Prabhupāda as he entered.

"Thank you very much for your kind reception," said Śrīla Prabhupāda from his seat in the temple room. "The press reporters were asking me that why do we make distinction between man and woman and black and white? But we make distinction not in that way." Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that the attempt to make everyone equal materially would be a failure always, just as the United Nations' attempt at unity was a failure. *Bhagavad gītā* states that one with equal vision recognizes the differences between the bodies, but sees all beings as one spiritually.

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued, "If we make unfair distinction between

man and woman or black and white, then how in our temple are we all enjoying together? Because we are actually equal on the spiritual platform. We do not say that you are a woman, so you cannot become my disciple. Or you are black, therefore you cannot become my disciple. No, we welcome everyone. So that people may not misunderstand, you can just issue one statement that we say if you want to see everyone equally, treat everyone equally, then you have to come to the spiritual platform, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Materially it is not possible. But the aim should be one. If artificially you do not make distinction, that will not stay.

"Just like in your country, the blacks and whites, they have equal rights. But why they fight sometimes, racial fight? Because it is on a material platform. Our point is that you come to the spiritual platform and then this equality will be possible. Practically you can see. Here while you are chanting, dancing, the boy is dancing, the father is dancing, the black is dancing, the white is dancing, the young is dancing, the old is dancing. You can see practically—everyone dancing. And they are not artificially dancing like dog, but by spiritual ecstasy."

After his talk, Prabhupāda called for questions.

Ravindra Svarupa "What is the best way to deal with skepticism?"

Prabhupāda "Skepticism—rascalism [Devotees laugh] We are not going to deal with rascalism. We are going to deal with sense. Skepticism, they do not believe in anything—everything is false. They are so disappointed, they think everything is false. We are not going to deal with such men. What is the use? Is not that skepticism? What is that skepticism?"

Ravindra Svarupa "Disappointment, that's all."

Prabhupāda "So why should one be disappointed? We say that you should come to the spiritual platform and you will be happy. We want to deliver him from the platform of his disappointment. Sometimes one being very disappointed commits suicide. We say, 'Why are you disappointed? You come to the spiritual platform and you will be happy.' So we are not going to accept his philosophy, skepticism, but we want to deliver him from his fallen condition. That is our mission.

"The living entity, the spirit soul, is by nature happy. There is no question of disappointment. You see Kṛṣṇa's picture anywhere. How happy they are. The gopīs are happy, the cowherd boys are happy, Kṛṣṇa is happy. Simply happiness. Where is disappointment? So you come to that platform, and then you will also be happy. Come to Kṛṣṇa, come and dance with Kṛṣṇa, eat with Kṛṣṇa. That is information we are giving. What is the question of disappointment? Come to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa therefore personally

comes to show how happy He is in Vrndāvana. And He is inviting, 'Come to Me.' "

Prabhupāda continued his ecstatic description of happiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and then concluded, "Is that all right?" Many voices together answered, "Yes!" There was no disappointment or skepticism in Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had come to Philadelphia primarily for the Rathayātrā. Since 1970, the devotees had been holding Rathayātrā in Philadelphia, although the early festivals had been small. For the first festival the devotees had taken small deities on procession on a decorated cigar box. They had placed the deities on an altar on the bank of the Schuylkill River and had held *kṛtana* while people picnicked and lay around in the sunshine. The next year's festival had been a little bigger, with foot-high deities riding on a palanquin. It was still not a very ambitious festival, but Śrīla Prabhupāda had written in appreciation.

I am so glad to hear how nicely you performed Rathayatra festival. Next year you can perform the regular ceremony with the cart as we are doing in San Francisco and Loodoo. That will be very nice. It doesn't matter if you construct a small one, but you can hold a festival.

Ravindra Svarūpa had become temple president just after Prabhupāda's letter had arrived, and he had resolved to have a real Rathayātrā cart for 1972. So the devotees had done it—a small cart, but a cart, pulled in procession down to Washington Square Park. By 1973 they had made a large cart, and devotees from other cities had come to help with the festival. Again Śrīla Prabhupāda responded.

At Rathayatra there must be either one or three carts. It is very good news to hear that one television station is interested to do a special program on the Rathayatra festival. These festivals are good for showing to the people in general that Krishna consciousness is real enjoyment. Everything else is simply artificial. Your plans for Rathayatra festival are very nice.

In the summer of 1974 Ravindra Svarūpa had written to Prabhupāda about the preaching activities in Philadelphia and had sent photos of their

Jagannātha deities. Śrīla Prabhupāda had been moved by the pictures.

I want to thank you a hundred times for the excellent way you are worshipping the deity there as I can see from the color photographs you have sent. From my childhood I was also worshipping Lord Jagannath. When I was six years old my father gave me a ratha and I was performing the Rathayatra in my neighborhood. Now in the Western world you are worshipping Lord Jagannath so gorgeously and it pleases me very much. Thank you again for the way you are conducting the deity worship in the Philadelphia temple. As for the Rathayatra ceremony, you should go on with it, and I shall attend there next year. But you go on holding a splendid ceremony for the people of the city. I am sure that it will be a success.

In 1975 Śrīla Prabhupāda had written from Denver, assuring the Philadelphia devotees, "Yes, I am coming to your city on Friday morning, July 11, 1975, from Chicago. I look forward to meeting the professors." Therefore, when the devotees in Chicago had tried to convince Prabhupāda to stay and attend their festival, scheduled at the same time as Philadelphia's, he had declined.

Shortly after Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival it began to rain, all day Friday and all day Saturday. When time came for Prabhupāda's morning walk and rain was still pouring, he said, "So today I will take my walk by riding." Getting into his car along with some of his *sannyāsīs* and G.B.C. men, he set off in the rain for a ride through Fairmont Park. The rain continued on Saturday right up until the time for the Ratha-yātrā parade.

The parade was to start at Independence Mall, head down Walnut Street to Broad, circle City Hall, and end on the grassy slope behind the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Prabhupāda rode into the city, where he was to meet the Ratha-yātrā cart halfway through the procession. The rain had stopped, but dark clouds still hung ominously overhead.

Majestically the large forty-foot-high cart moved down Walnut Street. By the time it reached Eleventh Street, Śrīla Prabhupāda had gotten out of his car two blocks away and was walking toward Lord Jagannātha. A large group of devotees surrounded Prabhupāda, and the devotees on the cart could see him approaching. The two groups joined, and the *kīrtana* swelled. Standing before the cart now, Śrīla Prabhupāda got down on his hands and knees and touched his head to the road in obeisance to Lord Jagannātha.

This cart was the best yet, Prabhupāda said. He especially liked the large, stroog wheels, ornately decorated with small round and diamond-shaped mirrors. Mouotiog the cart, he took his seat heneath the deities, and for the first time io days, the clouds parted aod the sun shone through.

Now people started pouring out of offices aod stores. They lined the sidewalks aod came out ioto the rnad to joio the procession. As the cart circled City Hall, the soud of the devotees' sioging became magnified, echoing off the tall buildings. The crowd was the largest ever at aoy Philadelphia Ratha-yātrā.

Hecklers—Christiao fuodamentalists with big hooers readiog “Get smart, get saved!” aod “Repent or burn!” —were ineffectual amid the large crowd aod the uproarious *kīrtana*. At ooe point, when Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared particularly satisfied, a devotee on the cart leaoed over aod asked Śrīla Prabhupāda what he thought of the festival. Prabhupāda replied that he was thinking the American Vaiṣṇavas were now permaoently in the West.

The park behind the art museum was crowded with people waiting. Śrīla Prabhupāda took his seat onstage and begao lecturing over the public address system: “Ladies and gentlemen, first of all I wish to thank you, the inhabitants of this great city, Philadelphia. You are so kind and enthusiastic in taking part in this movement. So I am very much obliged to you. I am especially obliged to the American boys and girls who are helping me so much io spreadiog this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the Western couotries.”

Prabhupāda explained how all liviog entities are eternal but, having taken material bodies, are subject to the tribulations of hirth, death, disease, and old age. In the humao form, the soul can choose to go back to the spiritual world or to suffer birth after hirth in the material world. “But why should we remain in this material body and undergo repetition, change of body?” Prabhupāda asked. “Let us have our original, spiritual body. That is wanted. That is intelligent.”

Prabhupāda explained the science of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa aod invited everyone to try it. “We don’t charge anythiog for this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*,” he said. “We are chaotiog everywhere, as you saw in this Ratha-yātrā. Our only means is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. And these thousands of men are following, simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. So you can uoderstaod what is the potency of this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. We did not pay you ladies and gentlemen anythiog to follow us, but we simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. So it is very potent. You will never feel tired chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. You see prac-

tically. You can go on chanting twenty-four hours, you will never feel tired. Therefore it is said, *golokera prema-dhana*: this chanting vibration is coming from the spiritual world."

Śrīla Prabhupāda talked about the inner meaning of Ratha-yātrā: Rādhārāṇī's meeting Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra and trying to bring Him back to Vṛndāvana. "It is a very ecstatic feeling," he said. "Those who are advanced devotees, they can enjoy." Concluding his address, he invited everyone to look at the Kṛṣṇa conscious literature and try to understand.

The devotees had prepared twelve hundred pounds of *halavā* and large quantities of vegetables, sweets, and fruit punch, which they very efficiently served to the crowd. Prabhupāda was satisfied with everything and returned to his house, while the devotees continued until sunset, feasting, chanting, and hosting thousands of festival-goers.

The day after Ratha-yātrā, Śrīla Prabhupāda met with a roomful of people, including two reporters and several parents of his disciples. The reporters were Ms. Sandy Nixon, a freelance writer, and from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* a Ms. Jones, the same woman who had spoken with Śrīla Prabhupāda at the airport. Seeing *japa* beads around Ms. Nixon's neck, Prabhupāda said, "She is a devotee. She was chanting."

Ms. Nixon said she was writing a book on the popular *gurus* and had about fifteen questions to ask Śrīla Prabhupāda. "I am going to ask you questions," she said, "and most of the time I might be able to answer them myself." Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed to like her, if only because she wore the *japa* beads, but some of the devotees flinched at her remark about already knowing the answers to the questions she was about to ask.

"How did Kṛṣṇa consciousness develop?" Ms. Nixon asked.

"Kṛṣṇa consciousness is already there in everyone's core of heart," replied Śrīla Prabhupāda. "You have seen how during the whole procession they were chanting and dancing in ecstasy. So do you think that is artificial? No. Artificially nobody can chant and dance for hours together. That means the awakening of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Śrīla Prabhupāda patiently and carefully answered each question—about Christ, about *gurus*, about the daily lives of the devotees. While discussing the evils of a godless society, he mentioned the slaughter of cows. "It is an innocent animal," he said. "It is simply eating grass given by God and supplying milk. And from milk we can live. And the gratefulness is—cut her throat. Is that civilization? What do you say?"

"I agree a hundred percent," Ms. Nixon replied. "I want you to say these things instead of me. I am asking the questions for others, of course, who do not understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Again, the devotees flinched. That Prabhupāda did not always respond to a person's attitude or nuance did not mean that he was imperceptive. He sometimes chose not to relate to a certain idiom or react to a certain foolishness, like Ms. Nixon's claims to be an expert on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And often he simply ignored a person's trivial conversation or mundane philosophy. But he was always in touch with whomever he talked to, addressing that person's true self-interest. He knew Ms. Nixon didn't know the answers to the questions she asked, and he understood that she was, despite her temporarily donned *japa* beads, not inquiring as a submissive disciple. Nevertheless, he was compassionate, answering to enlighten both her and her readers.

Ms. Nixon plunged onward. "How do you feel about women's lib?"

Prabhupāda remained silent, and a devotee repeated, "She wants to know about the women's liberation. What is your feeling about women's liberation?"

"That I don't want to discuss," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "because..." Śrīla Prabhupāda's serious expression slowly changed to a smile, and then he laughed. Everyone laughed. His Chicago remarks were famous. On the one hand, he didn't want to start another controversy; but he did want to clear up the issue.

He continued, "As you have asked, so I may explain how the foolish women are being cheated by the intelligent men. In your country they have given you liberty. Liberty means equal rights. Is it not? Man and woman have equal rights."

Ms. Nixon: "They are trying in this country."

Prabhupāda: "All right, trying. But you women, you cannot see that this so-called equal rights means cheating the women. Now I say more clearly that a woman and man meet, now they become lovers, then they have sex, and the woman becomes pregnant, and the man goes away. The simple woman, she has to take charge of the child and beg for government alms, 'Please give me money.' This is your independence. So you admit this is independence? Or she tries to kill the child. Do you think it is very good independence? What is your answer?" Śrīla Prabhupāda looked challengingly at both women. They had asked their questions, now he was asking.

Ms. Jones: "What is my answer to whether or not I was going to kill a child? Is that the question?"

Prabhupāda: "Yes, they are killing now, abortion."

Ms. Jones: "Well, she has made the choice."

Prabhupāda: "You have made your choice to kill your child. Is that a very good choice?"

Ms. Nixon: "It's the worst crime you could make."

Śrīla Prabhupāda (to Ms. Jones): "Do you think it is very good business?"

Ms. Jones: "I think it is a very complicated question."

Prabhupāda: "Therefore I say they are cheating you in the name of independence. That you do not understand. They are cheating you, and you are thinking you are independent."

Ms. Nixon: "They forget the responsibility that comes with freedom."

Prabhupāda: "Yes, they [the men] do not take the responsibility. They go away. They enjoy and go away. And the woman has to take the responsibility. Either kill the child or maintain begging. Do you think begging is very good? In India, although they are poverty-stricken, still they do not become independent. They remain under the care of the husband, and he takes all responsibility. She has neither to kill the child nor to beg for maintaining the child.

"So which is independence? To maintain under a husband is independence, or to become free to be enjoyed by everyone? There is no freedom, but still they think they have freedom. That means under some plea the men are cheating the women, that's all. So in the name of independence they have agreed to be cheated by another class. That is the situation."

Prabhupāda explained that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement had the highest regard for women. "But to protect them from this exploitation by man," he said, "we teach that you do like this, you do like that. You be married, be settled up. Don't wander independently. We teach them like that. But so far Kṛṣṇa consciousness is concerned, we equally distribute. There is no such thing that, 'Oh, you are a woman, less intelligent or more intelligent, therefore you cannot come.' We don't say that. We welcome woman, man, poor, rich—everyone. Because on that platform there is equality. That is equality."

Next Ms. Jones began to question. Ever since Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in Chicago, she had been noting what she thought was Prabhupāda's excessive material opulence.

"You have said that you are very small," she began, "and that you are not God. Yet it appears to me, as an outsider, that the devotees treat you as if you were God."

Prabhupāda "Yes, that is devotees' duty Just like a government officer Personally he is not very important, but so long as he executes the government order, he should be respected as the government That is the way Even if an ordinary policeman comes, you have to respect him—because he is government man But that does not mean *he* is respected If that man thinks, 'I have become government People are respecting me,' then he is foolish But the etiquette is that when the government man comes, you should give him respect as the government"

Ms Jones "I wonder about the many beautiful material things that the devotees bring to you For instance, when you left the airport you left in a big, beautiful, fancy car I wonder about this"

Prabhupāda "That is teaching them how to respect If you respect a government man as government, then you must treat him like that If you respect the spiritual master as God, then you must offer him the facilities of God Otherwise, how should he treat me as God, simply in his mind? No In action also"

Ms Jones "I am sorry, what was that you said?"

Prabhupāda "If the spiritual master is treated as God, so the devotee must practically show how he is treating him as God God travels by a golden car, so if the spiritual master is offered an ordinary motorcar, still it is not sufficient, because he has to be treated like God What is this motorcar for God?"

The devotees laughed at Prabhupāda's bold logic They had never thought of it quite like that If the *guru* is God's representative, then why quibble if he is offered a mere Cadillac of this material world?

Prabhupāda "They are still deficient If God comes to your home, will you bring Him an ordinary motorcar, or would you arrange for a golden car? So your point is that they offer me a nice motorcar, but I say it is not sufficient. They are still lacking to treat him as God Be practical"

Ms. Jones didn't think it was funny She had another question Her questions became more challenging Prabhupāda explained to her how she must have spiritual vision to see things in their proper perspective. "But if you have no eyes—therefore you are envious because they have offered me a nice motorcar So you have to make your eyes to see. A blind man cannot see. The eyes are to be treated, how to see."

Ms. Jones had one more question One of the most difficult things to understand in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, she said, was the Deities How could someone brought up in the West accept that the Deities represented God?

Śrīla Prabhupāda first explained that the spiritual soul within the body was the real self. "Therefore," he said, "as you cannot see the spirit, so you cannot see the Supreme Spirit, or God. But to show His kindness upon you He has appeared just like wood and stone, so that you can see."

The two reporters were finished with their questions, and they thanked Prabhupāda, who then turned his attention to others in the room. When a father of one of the devotees mentioned that he himself professed no religion, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied indirectly that the father was therefore a fool. The man admitted it. The mother, however, was more spiritually inclined, and Prabhupāda praised her, stating that the son takes on the traits of the mother.

Another guest spoke. "I would like to ask, Swami, would you pray for me?"

"I am praying for everyone," Prabhupāda replied softly. "That is my business. Otherwise, why have I come here?"

A woman addressed Prabhupāda: "As a mother, I too wish to thank you. My daughter Joy has found Kṛṣṇa consciousness. She has been recommended for initiation tomorrow."

Prabhupāda: "So we recommend everyone. Every American should be initiated. That is our recommendation. The sooner you accept this proposal, it is good for you. To know God and love Him. Is there any difficulty? Some have become interested, why not others?"

Prabhupāda again glanced at the father who claimed to have no religion. "Your son is interested," he said. "Why the father is not interested? What is the reason?"

Thus the evening *darśana* continued, until after a few hours Prabhupāda ended it and distributed *prasādam*.

When the last guest had left, several of the women devotees asked Prabhupāda about the actual position of his women disciples. He smiled. "When a woman becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious," he said, "her brain is automatically bigger." The devotees laughed.

As he smiled, his devotees understood him perfectly: whoever became a devotee, man or woman, became more intelligent. Being transcendental to the issue of men's or women's rights, Prabhupāda saw beyond the designation of the body. He saw that the criterion for intelligence wasn't material—one's sex, race, or nationality—but was one's desire for spiritual life.

A woman devotee asked Prabhupāda a further question about the

position of women, and he replied, "Of course you are not a woman. You are a devotee."

Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed to see several professors—acquaintances of Rāvindra Svarūpa's. Having received his B.A. in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania and his M.A. from Temple University, Rāvindra Svarūpa was now pursuing a Ph.D. from Temple. He had once given up academics as part of the world of *māyā* and had fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but Prabhupāda had encouraged him to return for a further degree.

While in Philadelphia Śrīla Prabhupāda had spoken out against the process of inductive reasoning. On one morning walk Rāvindra Svarūpa had said, "Prabhupāda, the same criticism that you just made of induction was also made by John Stewart Mill and Bertrand Russell, but they became skeptics. They say, therefore, there is no knowledge at all."

"That is another nonsense," Śrīla Prabhupāda had replied. "That is also speculation—'Because I have failed, therefore there is no knowledge.'"

Dr. Yogesh Patel, a Western-educated, Indian-born scholar of Buddhism and Māyāvāda Hinduism, taught in the religion department at Temple University. Accompanied by two graduate students, Dr. Patel dropped by one afternoon while Śrīla Prabhupāda was talking in his room with several of his disciples. Rāvindra Svarūpa made the introductions.

Prabhupāda: "So you are teaching Hinduism?"

Dr. Patel: "Yes."

Prabhupāda: "What is that Hinduism?"

Dr. Patel: "I don't know. You tell me what Hinduism is."

Prabhupāda: "You don't know? You are teaching Hinduism but you don't know what it is? This is our Dr. Svarūpa Dāmodara. He is also a Ph.D. Let us get his opinion on this. [Turning to Svarūpa Dāmodara.] What do you think of that? He is teaching, but he does not know."

Svarūpa Dāmodara: "Cheater, Śrīla Prabhupāda. That is called cheater."

Prabhupāda: "So you have heard his judgment that you are a cheater?" Dr. Patel became angry and raised his voice at Śrīla Prabhupāda. The professor and Śrīla Prabhupāda were immediately into a battle.

Dr. Patel: "You teach me! If I say I don't know what is religion, then you teach me."

Prabhupāda: "A spiritual master is not your servant. First you become shaven-headed like my students, then I will teach you. You have to offer your obeisances and surrender to the spiritual master. Then he will reveal the truth."

Dr. Patel replied that he *did* offer his obeisances to Prabhupāda when he first entered the room.

Prabhupāda: "Then my first instruction to you is to stop this cheating." By now both Śrīla Prabhupāda and Dr. Patel were speaking with raised voices. Most of the devotees were shocked speechless. Some of them, like Brahmānanda Swami, felt compelled to somehow end the meeting.

Prabhupāda: "You ask me what is religion. My reply is, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. Kṛṣṇa says religion means *śaraṇam vraja*—fully surrender."

Dr. Patel: "What do you mean by surrender?"

Prabhupāda: "You don't know the meaning of surrender? Give me a dictionary. Let us see."

Dr. Patel (yelling): "No! I want the *Sanskrit* etymological meaning of *surrender*!"

Prabhupāda: "You don't want a spiritual master. You want a Sanskrit teacher. We cannot waste our time any more." Brahmānanda Swami saw this as his cue. He leaned over to Dr. Patel and asked him to leave, "before you get offensive." Dr. Patel and Brahmānanda Swami then rose and left the room together.

Śrīla Prabhupāda remained shaking with anger. The senior devotees looked over at Raviṇdra Svarūpa reproachfully. How could he bring such a man to see Prabhupāda? Raviṇdra Svarūpa was appalled and frightened. Never before had anyone seen Prabhupāda explode with such anger.

After staying up all night, Raviṇdra Svarūpa approached Prabhupāda the next morning with a prepared apology. "Śrīla Prabhupāda," he began, "I am really sorry that I brought that professor to see you last night. I had no idea he was such a rascal."

Śrīla Prabhupāda looked up in surprise. "Oh," he said, "that is all right." He paused, and then added with quiet satisfaction, "At least he was chastised."

Dr. Thomas Hopkins, another teacher of Hinduism, came to see Prabhupāda, but in a much different mood. From the beginning they

experienced an immediate rapport. Dr. Hopkins asked Prabhupāda the relationship of *Bhagavad-gītā* to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Prabhupāda replied that the *Bhāgavatam* was like the graduate study of the *Gītā*, beginning where the *Gītā* left off.

Dr. Hopkins: "If someone was going to collect a very small section of your work, say one or two verses, what would you want them to collect?"

"That is stated in two verses," Prabhupāda replied. "*Dharmasya hy āpatargasya...*" And he had the translation read: "All occupational engagements, *dharmas*, are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service, *dharma*, should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification."

Prabhupāda had the purport read, and he expanded on it further, explaining how people are only after material gain, neglecting the real purpose of life.

Dr. Hopkins: "Do you think, then, that this message is the most important message that you have to convey?"

Prabhupāda: "That is the most important message, because you are not this material body. Suppose you have got this shirt. So if you simply try to maintain this shirt, is that a very good intelligence? Without taking care of your person? Similarly, we are spirit soul, and the body is just like dress. So in the whole material world everyone is engaged to take care of the body. Nobody knows what is spirit soul, what is his need."

Dr. Hopkins seemed pleased to hear such a broad explanation of Vaiṣṇavism. When he asked about Śiva, Prabhupāda explained that although Lord Śiva should not be considered equal to Lord Viṣṇu, he was the best Vaiṣṇava, the chief devotee of Viṣṇu, and he could be worshiped as such.

And Lord Rāma?

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that Rāma was an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. Professor Hopkins was pleased to hear this. Prabhupāda explained that Madhva, Rāmānuja, and Viṣṇu Svāmī were all "big, big *ācāryas*." Dr. Hopkins then asked about Tukarāma, the saint of Mahārāṣṭra.

Prabhupāda: "Yes, Tukarāma accepted Viṣṇu as Supreme. He accepted the process of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *sāṅkīrtana*. And he accepted Caitanya Mahāprabhu as his *guru*. So there is no difference between Tukarāma and Caitanya."

Dr. Hopkins: "So Lord Viṭṭhala and Kṛṣṇa are the same?"

Prabhupāda: "Lord Viṭṭhala is Viṣṇu."

Dr. Hopkins: "And the Alvars of Tamil Nadu, Ādivāsī—you accept their teachings also? So the real question is between Vaiṣṇava and others."

Prabhupāda: "Yes, that is the question—Vaiṣṇava and non-Vaiṣṇava. The actual difference is personalist and impersonalist."

Dr. Hopkins: "You would see the worshipers of Śiva as impersonalists?"

Prabhupāda: "Yes, impersonalists. Śaṅkarācārya said that ultimately the Absolute Truth is impersonal, and one can imagine a personal form for the benefit of the worshiper."

When Dr. Hopkins pointed out that some of the Śiva worshipers seemed to be personalists, Prabhupāda explained the real mentality of the Śaivites, according to Śaṅkara. "'Now I am a devotee,'" said Prabhupāda, "but as soon as I become perfect, I become One.' That is their theory. 'In the preliminary state, when I am not perfect, I am worshiping some imaginary form of God. But when I become perfect, there is no need of worshiping. I become One.'"

As a scholar, Dr. Hopkins was visibly pleased to hear the authentic philosophy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When Prabhupāda mentioned the *smārta-brāhmaṇas* as also being impersonalists, Dr. Hopkins was surprised.

"It would be very difficult to pick them out," said Prabhupāda. "Most of the so-called Vaiṣṇavas are impersonalists."

Dr. Hopkins: "So the deciding test as to whether one is a serious devotee or not is not only whether one is devoted now, but that he sees the goal as perpetual devotion?"

Prabhupāda: "Yes, he is *nitya-yukta*. That means perpetually."

Dr. Hopkins, considering this criterion, inquired about the position of Sri Aurobindo, who seemed to be beyond impersonalism. Prabhupāda agreed.

"He says that above the Māyāvāda philosophy there is something else," Prabhupāda explained. "That is *bhakti*. But Aurobindo could not understand, because he did not take education from realized persons. He wanted to realize by himself."

Dr. Hopkins: "So his problem was the effort to do this on his own?"

Prabhupāda: "Yes. He did not go through the *guru-paramparā*. Therefore it will take a long time."

Dr. Hopkins finally had to leave and thanked Prabhupāda for his time and wisdom. "Why don't you join us also?" asked Prabhupāda. "The whole human society should join us." Dr. Hopkins replied that he had been a friend of the devotees for many years and suspected that in the

end he might end up as a *sonnyūśī*. Prabhupāda pointed out that *sonnyūśo* didn't mean a change of dress but rather giving everything to Kṛṣṇa.

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July 15, 1975

Śrīla Prabhupāda had a direct flight from Philadelphia to San Francisco. He and Upendra sat in the first-class section, while Brahmānanda Swami, Harikeśa, and Pradyumna traveled economy class. Viśākhā-devī dāśī had also come, to photograph Śrīla Prabhupāda.

After the plane had reached cruising altitude, a uniformed gentleman emerged from the cabin. Immediately he caught sight of Śrīla Prabhupāda sitting by the window and walked over. When he leaned over and asked Prabhupāda how he was, Prabhupāda saw that the man wanted to talk, so he asked Upendra to get up and give the gentleman his seat.

"You are the captain?" Prabhupāda surmised.

"No," the man replied. "I am a flight supervisor, come to overlook the pilot and the crew. Would it be all right if I asked you a philosophical question?"

Prabhupāda nodded, apparently pleased.

"Is everything created by God?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda said yes and quoted the *Vedānta-sūtra*: *janmādy asya jatoḥ*. Everything in existence, Prabhupāda said, has its origin in God.

"Then what is evil?" the flight supervisor asked. "Is evil also God's creation?"

"For God there is not good or evil," Prabhupāda explained. "Everything is good. Goodness is God's frontage, and evil is God's back portion. Taking this example, the chest or the back of the body are equal. It is not that when there is some pain in the back side I don't care for it, I simply take care of it when there is pain in the chest. No. Although it is the back side, it is as important as the front side.

"So evil and good are also of the same importance? No. For God there is nothing evil. Just like for the sun there is no darkness. But for us there is light and darkness. If you keep your back to the sun, you will find darkness. And if you face the sun, then there is no darkness.

"We create darkness as soon as we change our position. If instead of remaining in front of God I keep God on the back, then there is darkness. Otherwise, there is no question of darkness. But in the sun as it is, there is no such darkness. Therefore God is all-good. But for us, when we forget

God, that is evil. And when we are in God consciousness always, then everything is good. Is that all right?"

The man seemed to understand and respectfully accepted the answer. He was about to ask another question when a well-dressed but somewhat drunken passenger came up to them and spoke. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked up at the man and asked, "Are you afraid of death?" The intoxicated man stammered, sobered, and walked away.

The flight supervisor inquired again, taking his meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda as a rare opportunity. "Can you tell me how one can become peaceful?" he asked.

Śrīla Prabhupāda began quoting *Bhagavad-gītā*, *bhoktāraṁ yajña tapasām...*, and, signaling Viśākhā, asked for a copy of the *Gītā*. The devotees quickly consulted, but no one had a *Bhagavad-gītā*.

When Prabhupāda heard this he became angry, although containing his feelings in the presence of his guest. He then explained to the man that one had to have knowledge of God as the supreme controller, the supreme enjoyer, and the best friend of everyone; only then could one have peace. "Out of foolishness," Prabhupāda said, "we are claiming the land is our property. Therefore there is no peace. But actually, God is the proprietor."

Both Śrīla Prabhupāda and the flight supervisor enjoyed their talk, and as the flight supervisor excused himself, he heartily shook Prabhupāda's hand.

Prabhupāda called for Pradyumna. His eyes glowing in transcendental anger, he reprimanded Upendra and Pradyumna for not having a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā*; they should have one with them at all times. Pradyumna offered that although he didn't have Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, he just happened to be carrying an edition by another author. This infuriated Prabhupāda even more. He then ordered Upendra never to travel again without carrying three books: *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and the first volume of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Berkeley

July 15, 1975

Within less than two weeks Prabhupāda had traveled from west coast to east coast and back. This was his first visit to ISKCON Berkeley's recently acquired headquarters, a large church complex, and as usual, hundreds of devotees from many Western centers had converged to meet him.

His arrival address specifically dealt with the position of the *guru*. Only unto one with unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa and *guru*, he explained, is the essence of Vedic wisdom revealed. "Outsiders may think that the *guru* is very puffed up," said Prabhupāda, "and he is sitting and taking respect from the disciple. But the fact is that they are to be taught like that, how to offer respect to the spiritual master."

Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly encountered this misunderstanding. A year ago in Paris he had been heckled by radical students who envied his sitting on an elevated seat. And in America the reporters often portrayed him as enjoying material comforts provided by his disciples. But Prabhupāda maintained that despite a plethora of charlatans bringing disrepute to the word *guru*, anyone sincerely desiring to learn transcendental science had to go to a bona fide *guru*, the representative of God.

"A *guru's* business," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "is to protect the subordinate disciples from falldown. Just like I am traveling all over the world, twice, thrice in a year. My duty is to see that my disciples, who have accepted me as *guru*, may not fall down. That is my anxiety."

"Now how can one become *guru* and representative of Kṛṣṇa? Everyone will say, 'I am representative of Kṛṣṇa. I am *guru*.' No. The real thing is enunciated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who says, *āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra ei deśa*: 'You just become *guru* on My order.' So *guru* means he who is carrying out the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—not self-made *guru*."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that sometimes people gave him much credit for having done a wonderful thing for the whole world. "But," he confessed, "I do not know that I am a wonderful man. But I know one thing: that I am speaking what Kṛṣṇa has spoken—that's all. I am not making any addition or alteration. I am presenting *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. This credit I can take."

Prabhupāda continued to stress that the *guru* must repeat the message of Kṛṣṇa. If a so-called *guru* wanted to be a cheater, that was a different thing. There would always be cheaters and people who wanted to be cheated. Usually such "*gurus*" cheated by accepting disciples without ordering them to stop sinful acts. "If I say that you can do all nonsense," Prabhupāda said, "simply take this *mantra* and give me \$125, they will like. So I would have collected millions of dollars if I would have cheated like that. But I do not want that. I want one student who follows my instructions. I don't want millions. *Ekai candras tamo hanti na ca tārāḥ sahasraśah*. If there is one moon in the sky, that is sufficient for illumina-

tion There is no need of millions of stars My position is that I want to see that at least one disciple has become a pure devotee Of course, I have got many sincere and pure devotees That is my good luck But I would have been satisfied if I could find out only one There is no need of millions of stars"

Due to zoning restrictions, the devotees were not allowed to use the Berkeley temple as a residence But since no suitable rooms were immediately available in the neighborhood, the devotees decided to accommodate Śrīla Prabhupāda and his personal staff in the temple for the few days of his visit, hoping the authorities wouldn't find out

But on the first night, at two A.M., the police came by to check Śrīla Prabhupāda was already up, working at his *Bhagavatam* translation, when the police knocked loudly on the outside door near his room Young Mike, who was to receive initiation in a few days, had been posted as a guard He opened the door, and three flashlights shone into his face The officers entered and showed their credentials "You're not supposed to be sleeping in here," one of them said roughly

"I wasn't," said Mike

"Come on, we saw you in your sleeping bag"

"No," Mike protested "I was just lying there because I'm guarding my spiritual master"

Śrīla Prabhupāda could easily hear the disturbance just outside his room Other devotees who were spending the night in the building with Prabhupāda came out of their rooms and tried reasoning with the officers about the special occasion of the spiritual master's visit One of the policemen began roaming around, checking in corners with his flashlight, opening doors Now all the devotees in the building, about half a dozen, were standing with the policemen in the hall outside Prabhupāda's room

"Where's the old man?" one of the policemen asked

Bahulāśva, the temple president, requested them not to disturb Śrīla Prabhupāda But the policemen made no attempt at politeness, they were, in fact, overtly nasty One policeman banged on the window to Prabhupāda's room

"Don't disturb him," Bahulāśva requested "He's a very elderly man He's not sleeping These are the hours in which he writes, and all these men are his personal entourage. They're staying here to help him We are not violating the rules"

Suddenly one of the policemen opened Prabhupāda's door and shone his light in on Prabhupāda's face. All three policemen peered in, while Śrila Prabhupāda looked up at them, concerned, yet detached. The policeman shone his flashlight into the corners of Prabhupāda's simple, dimly lit room. No one said anything, and after about ten seconds they shut the door.

The police officers and the devotees continued arguing, the devotees contending that they were not using the building as a residence, the police citing infractions and taking down notes. Warning that they would be back, they finally left.

The incident had constituted about a half-hour interruption of Prabhupāda's work. But as the building became quiet again, Prabhupāda continued translating the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and speaking his purports into the dictating machine.

Prabhupāda agreed to hold a press conference. He welcomed regular opportunities to address the press, because even though their stories were often negative or dwelt on controversies, whatever truth the paper printed generally outweighed the damaging reports. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa always appeared, and usually there would be mention of Prabhupāda's preaching or of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Personal details about Prabhupāda were generally not offensive. He no longer expected the press to print much of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy, although occasionally some philosophy appeared. He would often request reporters to please report accurately and not misrepresent or skip over what he had said.

The reporters, however, seemed to have a fascination for the trivial. In 1968, a reporter in Montreal had dwelt on Prabhupāda's casual shoes—"Hush-Puppied High Priest." Nevertheless, for Prabhupāda, press interviews and press conferences were a way of preaching.

The press conference was held in the temple and was attended by about a dozen reporters and photographers. Brahmananda Swami had the reporters write their questions on a piece of paper, so that one of the devotees could read them to Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda asked the photographers not to take pictures during the conference, since it would divert people's attention.

Devotee: "Śrila Prabhupada, would you comment on opposition to the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in this country?"

Prabhupāda: "Why should they oppose? What is the reason? If they are Christian or Jewish religious men, so we are advocating you chant

the holy name of God So why should there be objection? Is there any reason for such objection? What is the objection?"

Devotee "Some of the objections are that the followers of the Hare Kṛṣṇa sect are on the streets or in the airports bothering people"

Prabhupāda "The airport itself is a botheration So much sound, so much accident So why this little botheration they cannot tolerate? That means intolerance It is full of botheration, and because we are chanting they are very much disturbed We don't chant in the airport, but we ask people that, 'Here is a very good book—you will benefit If you like, you can take' So what is the wrong there? Tell me, what is the wrong? If I give you something very nice, is that wrong? You read any book—we have got fifty books—and you find out any fault in that If we are distributing some bad literature which is against the social welfare, then you can object But you see Bring all our books here and you will see Any page you open you will find something good Why are you denying to distribute such literature for the benefit of the people in general? What is the wrong there?"

Devotee "One of the things that people say is that the devotees are asking for donations, not just distributing books but asking for money That's a bother"

Prabhupāda "But he pays If he feels botheration, why does he pay? One who feels botheration does not pay But one who thinks that here is a nice book, then he says, 'All right, let me take it' Why you take this botheration? If it is botheration, how they are purchasing? They are paying their money, hard earned money Do you think they are bothered and at the same time they pay?"

Prabhupāda's sensible remark made the reporters laugh Now they began questioning him directly

Reporter "What will happen to the movement in the United States when you die?"

Prabhupāda "I will never die."

Devotees "Jaya! Haribol!"

Prabhupāda "I shall live from my books, and you will utilize."

Reporter "Why does the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement not engage in social protest?"

Prabhupāda "We are the best social workers People are fools and rascals, and we are teaching them nice idea of God consciousness We are the best social workers We will stop all crimes. What is your social work? Producing hippies and criminals—that is not social work Social work means the population must be very peaceful, wise, intelligent, and

God conscious—first-class men. That is social work. If you produce some fourth-class, fifth-class, tenth-class of men, what is social work? We are not producing that. Just see, here is a first-class man. They do not have any bad habit—illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating, and gambling. They are all young men. They are not addicted to all these things. This is social work."

When a reporter asked about the political effects of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, Prabhupāda said, "If this God consciousness is spread, then everyone will be brilliantly qualified." Recalling a discussion from his morning walk on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley, he added, "The students are studying psychology, but the result is that they are falling down from the tower in disappointment. And they have protected with glass."

Bahulāśva explained further what Prabhupāda meant: "In the bell tower on the Berkeley campus, students in the sixties would jump from that tower to kill themselves. So they put glass there to stop the students from jumping. So Prabhupāda was explaining that this is their education, that after getting their education they have to commit suicide."

Brahmānanda: "Śrīla Prabhupāda, one press man wanted to know what is this Ratha-yātrā festival. Why is it going on over here in the Western world?"

Prabhupāda: "If God is the proprietor of everything, He is also the proprietor of the Western world. Is there any dispute? If you say God is the proprietor of the Western world, what is wrong there? So if the Western world has forgotten God, and He comes to remind them, what is the wrong?"

Reporter: "But what is the purpose of the large carts and other things you use?"

Prabhupāda: "Large cart means God is very great. He requires very great car. [The devotees laugh.] Why should He go in a small car?"

Prabhupāda continued speaking until all questions were answered. Now whatever the reporters would write was up to them, but Prabhupāda had used the occasion for glorifying Lord Kṛṣṇa and explaining His movement. Whether press conference, public festival, private conversation, or translating, his purpose was the same.

During a morning walk on the Berkeley campus, Prabhupāda pronounced that nuclear war was inevitable. Devotees had brought up the

topic of proliferation of atomic weapons "Russia has so many weapons, China has so many weapons, the United States has so much "

Prabhupāda "Everyone now India also"

Devotee "They are all afraid of using them"

Prabhupāda "They *must* use it That is nature's arrangement [Chuckling] That you all die—that is nature's arrangement"

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswamī "When someone gets some power, he wants to try it out Just like there was that demon, Lord Śiva gave him power so that anyone's head he touched would fall off"

Prabhupāda "Yes, just like in your country there are so many cars, so that a poor man like me has car always—not an inch move on leg But because there are so many cars, naturally they must be used Similarly, there are so many weapons now that must be used That is the natural sequence They must use it"

Bahulāsya "That is why they have wars, just to use up the weapons"

Prabhupāda "Oh, yes"

Devotee "The only difficulty is that for one person to use the atomic weapon, that means it would be the entire waste of mankind So everyone is afraid of using the ultimate"

Prabhupāda "Anyway, they must be used There's no doubt about it Therefore we can say there will be war This is no astrology It is a natural conclusion"

Devotee "That will be total destruction"

Prabhupāda "Well, total or partial, that we shall see But they must be used"

Devotee "Under the threat of nuclear war, wouldn't Kṛṣṇa consciousness be more easy to spread?"

Prabhupāda "No Threat is already there. But they are such fools that they are not afraid of the threat Threat is already there. Everyone will die—that is the problem But who is caring for this? They are avoiding this They cannot take any antimeasures"

Yadubara "So it will take a war to bring them to their senses a bit?"

Prabhupāda "No, war is already going on But they are so senseless that they will not come to this They are so rascal Therefore they are described as *māḍha*—all rascals"

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa "It is very hard to preach to these fools, Prabhupāda"

Prabhupāda "No, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa That will be sufficient"

Śrīla Prabhupāda had rarely been so conclusive about nuclear war Earlier in the year, on a walk in Mayāpur, he had discussed how there

would be a World War III, and that talk had become a sensation throughout ISKCON. But before, he had always offered the alternative: if the people of the world could take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then the cumulative *kar-ma* could be reversed. But now he said it was inevitable.

While in Berkeley, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a visit from Yogi Bhajan, founder of the HHH Foundation, Swami Chidananda, president of the Divine Life Society, and Jain leader Swami Sushill Muni, president of the World Fellowship of Religion. Swami Sushill wore a white turban and, across his mouth, a white mask, in the tradition of the nonviolent Jains, who try to avoid killing even airborne microbes. Yogi Bhajan, dressed in typical Sikh fashion of white turban and white loose-fitting garments, was accompanied by a few of his Western disciples, similarly attired. Visits from various swamis and *yogis* were not uncommon for Śrīla Prabhupāda. Even when he did not agree with a particular philosophy, he was always the cordial host, pleasantly receiving guests in his simple quarters.

In Hawaii Yogi Bhajan had also visited Śrīla Prabhupāda to invite him to his Unity of Man Conference, which many *sādhus* were already scheduled to attend. Śrīla Prabhupāda had spoken sternly, pointing out that simply gathering people at a meeting was not unity. Real unity could be achieved only if the participants of the meeting agreed to accept the authorized science of God in the revealed scriptures. Now they had come to invite him to a second Unity of Man conference.

Swami Sushill and Swami Chidananda were particularly enthusiastic in praising Śrīla Prabhupāda and his ISKCON. "Your movement is something different," said Swami Chidananda. "It's all over the world, and you have so many thousands of people all over the world. We can't describe it. It's so amazing, and in this age how wonderfully it has been done! Without God's mercy nothing could have been done. That six lakhs of magazines have come out and been distributed in one month—it's amazing!"

Swami Sushill added, "You have established the same principles without any change here in a modern way. In Bengal, without your *āśrama* we couldn't have done anything. When we know there is an *āśrama* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we don't need to worry about anything, where to stay. What strikes me is that you don't compromise anywhere."

They mentioned the horrible sin of cow slaughter, and Śrīla Prabhupāda told how his movement was protecting cows in New Vrindaban. When

Swami Sushill asked how Prabhupāda interested the young people in God, Prabhupāda gave the example that the most popular sweet shop in Delhi was the one where everything was made with pure ghee. "If the thing is good," Prabhupāda said, "then there won't be a shortage of customers." He further pointed out that his teachings were based purely on *Bhagavad-gītā*, surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

When Swami Sushill asked how Prabhupāda got his followers to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda replied, "It's God who did it. God says, *mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*. So that is our duty—just to take shelter of Him. Lord Caitanya says, *yāre dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa*. That is, whoever you meet, just preach the teachings of Kṛṣṇa as in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. I don't have any *upadeśa* [instructions]. It's just Kṛṣṇa's *upadeśa*. We are all foolish. We can't have any *upadeśa*. So what are the teachings of Kṛṣṇa? We just keep on saying them. Kṛṣṇa says do like that, and that's what we do. So this is our secret. I do this, and that's what I teach to all these people. I am totally against manufactured religion. *Evam paramparā-prāptam*—just as Kṛṣṇa says."

In reply to Swami Sushill's question of how people could be brought together, Prabhupāda quoted a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that lists many races of the world and explains that all of them can be purified by taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee.

Prabhupāda's guests again invited him to their conference, and Swami Sushill added, "We were very glad to meet you today. We would like to call you sometime in our meeting of *yoga-dharma*."

"We'll come," said Prabhupāda. "What about your fellowship?"

"It's called World Fellowship of Religion," said Swami Chidananda. "Yogiji has made this Unity of Man Conference."

"But we invited him," said Yogi Bhajan, referring to the previous invitation.

Swami Chidananda: "But now you are having the second one."

Yogi Bhajan: "Yes, the second meeting is in Mexico. We will call him then as well."

Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled and said, "I told you before, there is not going to be any unity." This candid remark made them laugh.

"You say," said Swami Chidananda, remembering Prabhupāda's analysis, "that until everyone is God-minded, until then..."

"When God will desire," said Yogi Bhajan, "then everyone will become God-minded. What's the great deal about it?"

"God Himself says," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "*duḥkhalāyam aśāś-*

vatam—there is suffering. You cannot stay in this world. You have to leave. The main problem is birth, old age, disease, and death. So we are not anxious to adjust these things here, but these are the real problems.”

“What can we do about birth, old age, disease, and death?” asked Swami Chidananda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued preaching *Bhagavad-gītā*. Without overtly disagreeing, Prabhupāda’s guests inquired and listened with respect, considering him a great spiritual leader, potent in spreading Hindu *dharma*.

“He is great,” said Yogi Bhajan. “That’s what I want to learn—how he can do that.”

The conversation turned, and Prabhupāda mentioned that Yogi Bhajan was from the Sikh community, which is famous for its brave fighters. “When the British people were defeated,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda, “it was by the Sikh people. I have seen it. It is due to the Sikhs only. The Sikhs are *kṣatriya*. Some of them are *brāhmanas*, *brāhmana-kṣatriyas*.”

Swami Sushill: “Yes, I said to some of my students that you go to Prabhupāda, and he’ll make you *brāhmana-kṣatriyas*.”

Prabhupāda: “Yes, let us cooperate like that. You take the work of *kṣatriyas*, and we take the work of *brāhmanas*. For *brāhmanas* we need brain, and for *kṣatriyas* we need strength.”

As they spoke about nonviolence, Śrīla Prabhupāda argued that if one does not become God conscious, then he will undoubtedly be committing *himsā*, or violence.

Yogi Bhajan: “Yes, when they come to their senses, then they remember God.”

Prabhupāda (laughing): “Here in the West there is only *himsā*, nothing else.” Prabhupāda’s guests laughed with him.

Afterward, they took some photographs, and Śrīla Prabhupāda invited them, along with some of his disciples, to sit and take Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* together. Śrīla Prabhupāda requested his guests to attend the San Francisco Ratha-yātrā, to be held the next day, and they agreed.

July 20, 1975

This was not only the largest ISKCON Ratha-yātrā ever but also the largest gathering of devotees to date, larger even than the international gathering at Mayāpur earlier that year. Preparations at the festival site had expanded to include *prasādam* booths, Deity paraphernalia displays, souvenirs, and Prabhupāda’s books. Thousands joined the more than eight

hundred devotees in the procession through Golden Gate Park.

Because the builders of the carts had decided to make steel wheels instead of the usual wooden ones, difficulty arose. Śrīla Prabhupāda had warned them, "This is your American disease—always changing. Do not change the old design." But they had already done it. Riding in Subhadrā's cart, which had wooden wheels, Śrīla Prabhupāda experienced no personal inconvenience. The other two carts, however, did not fare so well; they began to vibrate so severely that support beams had to be added to the spokes during the procession. Soon the wheels became misshapen, and they creaked and rattled as though about to collapse. But somehow, after much difficulty, all three carts completed the course.

In the midst of the Ratha-yātrā activities, one of the devotees asked Śrīla Prabhupāda if he had ever attended the Ratha-yātrā festival in Jagannātha Purī. "No," Prabhupāda replied, "I was having my own Ratha-yātrā."

CHAPTER THREE

Preaching to America: Part 2

Los Angeles

July 22, 1975

More than three weeks had passed since Prabhupada had given the order for the BBT to produce seventeen books in two months. Now Rāmesvara and Radhavallabha reported that work was going on around the clock in all departments and that devotees were determined to meet their deadlines. Most Press workers attended *mangala arati* at four thirty A.M. chanted their prescribed rounds of *japa*, and worked all day until late at night, sometimes taking only one meal.

Additional editors, painters, photographers, indexers, typists, proof readers, and layout men had been called in from other ISKCON departments. Everyone was cooperating to fulfill Śrīla Prabhupada's desire. It was as though nothing else existed except the task before them.

Kingsport Press, one of the largest printers in the country, had taken the job of printing, agreeing to push back all other assignments to free their presses and bindery for work twenty four hours a day until all seventeen volumes were printed. A paper company in New York had agreed to supply paper at affordable terms to meet all the deadlines. The BBT's top photographer was in India photographing places of Caitanya *līla* especially in Bengal and Orissa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda freely gave his time to the artists and the Bengali editors, answering their questions. Several times a day his disciples would come to him about the exact use of Sanskrit and Bengali words. This was not merely a matter of lingual scholarship, since each word had to be translated in light of the previous *ācāryas'* explanations and Prabhupāda's own Kṛṣṇa conscious realization. Prabhupāda had cautioned disciple editors not to change but to ask.

The artists had their usual questions about how things should look according to Śrīla Prabhupāda's transcendental vision. In their desire to have the paintings completely accurate, they were greedy to ask him almost endless questions. Prabhupāda had said the transcendental paintings of his disciples were windows to the spiritual world; the artists didn't want their imaginations to obscure the view.

One day, Rāmeśvara came into Śrīla Prabhupāda's room carrying canvases by one of the artists whose proficiency the more experienced artists questioned. The artist in question, Gaurl-devī dāśī, was a book distributor with artistic talent, pressed into emergency service for the book production marathon. Rāmeśvara showed Śrīla Prabhupāda her painting of the Gundicā temple. Prabhupāda's verdict: "Oh, this is very nice." One of the senior artists was present and pointed out several technical errors, but Prabhupāda replied, "A blind uncle is better than none." Besides, he said, the painting showed a devotional spirit the readers of the book would appreciate.

Due to Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence in Los Angeles, the book production marathon intensified. Even without attending Prabhupāda's morning walks or classes or evening readings in the garden, the Press workers felt ecstasy. All day they worked at what Prabhupāda wanted most, and to take time off to go see him, they reasoned, would be selfish. Giving all their energy for Kṛṣṇa, they felt blissful.

The Press was busy day and night. To see devotees slumped over their desks or typewriters or lying beside their easels at two or three in the morning was not unusual. Proofreaders saw manuscripts come into and out of their hands so quickly they could hardly bear it. An artist might fall asleep before an uncompleted painting and awaken to find it being finished at another artist's easel.

Rāmeśvara, running on very little sleep, orchestrated everything, including the photographer in India, the printer, and the paper company. Sometimes he would work directly with Rādhavallabha on various aspects of the production.

Rādhavallabha had set the deadlines, and he kept to them at all costs. To the Press workers, he seemed to be present everywhere—encouraging them, bringing them supplies, seeing to their needs, begging and coercing them to complete their quotas. But one night he took a break and entered Prabhupāda's room during an informal gathering of devotees. Prabhupāda, his eyes closed, his head gently rocking, was listening to a tape of himself singing *bhajan*s. Opening his eyes and seeing

Rādhāvallabha seated among the others, he said, "I am keeping you," and again closed his eyes.

One of the devotees spoke up and said, "Oh, no, no, Prabhupāda. You're not bothering us." But another devotee turned to Rādhāvallabha and said, "I think Prabhupāda was talking to you." Rādhāvallabha realized what Prabhupāda meant; he was telling him to go back to work. It was as if Prabhupāda were actually saying, "Why are you sitting here looking at me? Get back to work."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased with the sincerity of his disciples. Seventeen books in two months he had asked them to produce, and they, rather than try to explain to him why this was impossible, had taken the order so seriously that they could not conceive of rejecting or changing or modifying it. Instead of modifying the order, they had modified their lives. They had gone beyond the realm of routine work into the realm of extraordinary effort. As a result, both they and Prabhupāda felt great satisfaction. As Prabhupāda said, it was all an arrangement for the satisfaction of Lord Caitanya and the previous *ācāryas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda decided to continue his U.S. tour, visiting Laguna Beach and San Diego and then going on to Dallas. From there he would visit New Orleans and the nearby ISKCON farm in Mississippi. Then on to Detroit, Toronto, Boston, and New York, eventually traveling to Europe and India.

From Prabhupāda's point of view, his touring was imperative for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As he had said in his arrival address at Berkeley, "I am traveling all over the world, twice, thrice in a year. My duty is to see that my disciples, who have accepted me as *guru*, may not fall down. That is my anxiety."

Prabhupāda's concern was for his disciples, but also for all people. Distressed by the fallen and ignorant state of humanity, especially in the West, he wanted to help the English-speaking world, as his spiritual master had ordered. This had been his spirit two years ago in Calcutta, when he had risen from his sickbed and flown to London to take part in the Ratha-yātrā. This was his great desire: to preach in the West, where people were so strongly under the grip of speculative philosophies, denying God and glorifying sense enjoyment. The mass of people would not easily change their ignorant ways, but if he could make only one person a pure devotee, he said, then his work would be successful.

Prabhupāda would work intensively with his important India projects for a few months, but then would always return to the West to again tour and preach. Both were required—developing his projects in India and touring the West. When Yogi Bhajan and company in Berkeley had expressed their amazement at how Prabhupāda was personally maintaining his disciples by traveling all over the world, Prabhupāda had admitted that it was difficult and that he was trying to train his G.B.C. secretaries to lead his movement. But so far, it seemed that as long as he had the power to do so, he would continue to travel.

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Laguna Beach

July 25, 1975

Laguna Beach was about a two-hour drive south of Los Angeles. The temple, a house near the beach, was crowded with guests and visiting devotees. After Prabhupāda had taken his seat upon the newly upholstered *vyāsāsana*, some of the temple leaders came forward one at a time and bathed his feet.

In the course of his lecture, Prabhupāda spoke against taking intoxicating drugs: "Is there anyone here who can say, 'I am the controller'? Is there anyone who will answer this? You may think that you are the controller, but you are controlled by drugs..." The city of Laguna Beach was notorious as an illicit drug center. Prabhupāda had come not to flatter anyone with sentimental spirituality but to cut through their illusion. Bathing the feet of the spiritual master was good, but to be a genuine devotee one had to strictly follow the regulations. One had to choose whether to be controlled by drugs or by Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda stayed next door to the temple in a neighbor's house. His first visitor was Rṣi dasa, who had given up his initiation vows and fallen away from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sporting long, curly hair and a beard, he had casually dropped by to pay a little visit to his former spiritual master. Prabhupāda received Rṣi warmly, and they both exchanged smiles and laughed. Rṣi's demeanor, however, was brazen, almost defiant, and he showed no contrition. Prabhupāda was not very happy to see the state of this boy to whom he had awarded the *sannyāsa* order a few years before.

In earlier years, Prabhupāda had cried when a dear disciple had left him. In those days, the fall of a disciple had been rare, almost unheard of. But over the years Prabhupāda had seen more casualties, even among

his G.B.C. leaders and *sannyāsīs*. In 1967, when one of his first disciples, Kṛṣṇa-devī dāśī, had left her husband, Subala, and gone off with a boyfriend, Prabhupāda had consoled Subala by reminding him how rare it was that one could become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. "The wonderful thing is not that Kṛṣṇa dāśī has left," Śrīla Prabhupāda had said, "but that we can stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Although devotees left Kṛṣṇa consciousness for various reasons, Śrīla Prabhupāda saw them all as having been tricked by illusion. The result was almost always the same, whether the defector left on the plea of a new religion, or new economic opportunities, or whatever; usually he or she would take up a life of sense gratification, abandoning the strict path of self-realization.

This was certainly true of Rṣi. When Prabhupāda asked him what he was doing with his life, he laughed and said he was playing saxophone. There was no need to ask him whether he was chanting sixteen rounds or following the four rules. But Rṣi wanted to assure Śrīla Prabhupāda that he was doing fine. "I think I have more freedom now," said Rṣi.

"Do you think you have freedom?" Prabhupāda challenged.

"Some," Rṣi replied. "By studying and working."

"What is your age?" Prabhupāda asked.

"Twenty-nine."

"Are you free not to become older?" Śrīla Prabhupāda persisted.

"No"

"Then what is your freedom?"

Rṣi gave a short laugh. "I don't care."

"That's all right," Prabhupāda replied, "but I am researching. I am now seventy-eight. I don't wish to die, but I am forced. But you too are forced to become old. No one wants to be old."

Recalling some of the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy, Rṣi tried to argue against Prabhupāda, saying that although he was forced to grow old, according to transmigration of the soul he would be free after death. And anyway, there were other freedoms.

Prabhupāda stuck to his original point and said, "Death is inevitable. Old age, no one wants. Everyone wants youth. Even an old man goes to the beach for health. I want youth, but I cannot have it. So where is the freedom?"

Prabhupāda then spoke at length, for Rṣi's benefit as well as for the benefit of the other devotees in the room. Persons under the influence of *māyā*, he said, declare that they are free. The drug addict or the drunkard

thinks he is free—to lie down on the street. Yet his actions involve him in the strict laws of material nature. The outlaw declares himself free from the laws of the state, but he is put into jail. What is the use of his saying he is free? “Therefore Kṛṣṇa says,” Prabhupāda explained, “that whatever little freedom you have got, just surrender that freedom to Me.”

Prabhupāda’s comments on false freedom were to the point. Within two hours of his arrival, he had already exposed the Laguna Beach mystique. Rsi continued to smile and argue, but before Prabhupāda he was just another youth with no real answers. Prabhupāda was not interested in debating; he wanted to help his disciple. Rsi, however, was using whatever freedom he had to defy Kṛṣṇa’s representative, trusting instead in his youth, his intoxication, and his music.

The door opened. “These are some professors, Śrīla Prabhupāda,” announced a devotee, “who form part of our congregation.” Prabhupāda greeted the new guests and asked that they sit up front on cushions.

“I was talking with this boy about freedom,” said Prabhupāda. “So I say there is no freedom for us. We are always dependent. What is your opinion about it?” One of the professors said he agreed, and Prabhupāda continued speaking. He talked with the professors for more than an hour.

Near the end, Upendra’s three-year-old son, Saumya, walked up to Prabhupāda from the back of the room. Prabhupāda gave him some money that was on the desk, and the boy ran back to his mother and gave her the money. “Yes. When I was young,” Prabhupāda reminisced, “if I got money I would take it to my mother. But then when I would become angry at her, I would demand it back. Sometimes I would steal money from my mother’s purse and go watch Charlie Chaplin movies.” His favorite scene was in a film called *Hard Times*, he said, when Charlie Chaplin sat down at a table with a knife and fork to eat a boot.

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San Diego

July 27, 1975

Śrīla Prabhupāda rode down the San Diego Freeway in the predawn darkness, on his way to San Diego to attend a festival in Balboa Park. On the way he passed through San Clemente, where former president Richard Nixon was staying. Prabhupāda had followed Nixon’s exposure and resignation and had often mentioned it in his lectures, sometimes as an example of how even the most powerful men are subject to anxiety

and loss, sometimes to illustrate the need for proper training in the four natural social orders

A devotee mentioned that Mr Nixon lived here with no position, scorned by his countrymen "Then you should go and preach to him," Śrīla Prabhupāda said Since the man had lost everything and was lamenting, he said, he might be receptive to hearing about the Absolute Truth Prabhupada had attempted a similar approach to Mahatma Gandhi

At Balboa Park Prabhupada was pleased with the devotees' booths and colorful tents and the stage they had erected in the meadow He had just begun addressing the large crowd, when a man in the audience began shouting Prabhupāda asked what he was saying, and a devotee explained, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, the man says he wants to have sex more than once a month"

"He is creating disturbance," said Prabhupada into the microphone.

After a tense moment, Prabhupada continued his lecture "So, as this man is talking about sex, so this whole material world is enchanted by sex" Taking the shouted protest as a new focus for his speech, Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted Prahlada Maharaja's statement that all material entanglement begins from sexual enjoyment, which in comparison to transcendental pleasure is paltry and abominable "But real happiness," Prabhupāda asserted, "is above the senses Whatever we enjoy with the gross senses is temporary, but permanent enjoyment is transcendental

"So this man," he continued, "was suggesting he wants sex at least once in a month Yes, that is allowed Five days after the wife's menstrual period the husband and wife can have sex for begetting rightful children" Prabhupāda used the Vedic technical term, *garbhadhana samskara*, to describe the process of purifying sex within marriage. The devotees were astonished that before a crowd of sexually liberated Southern Californians Prabhupāda was espousing responsible, legitimate sex Usually he discussed such matters, if at all, in letters to householders But if the Americans were intent on sex, then Prabhupāda would let them have it But he stressed responsible, restricted sex Otherwise, by irresponsible sex, one has to suffer

"Sex life is not denied," Prabhupāda said, "but one must take responsibility for sex life. Otherwise he becomes entangled in so many sinful activities. You can have sex life once in a month That is prescribed Because a woman has once in a month menstrual period So sex life is meant for simply begetting nice children, not for sense gratification If it is in regulative form, the world may not become hell If it is in irregular form, then the whole world will be hell Sex life is not denied Sex life

is not denied, but in a regulated form, so that you can get nice population and live very happily.

“Especially at the present moment, if you can produce children to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, that would be a great service to the Lord, because we want a Kṛṣṇa conscious population. Otherwise this world is going to hell. There were great empires like the Roman, Greek, and later on the Mogul empire, the British empire. Then there was Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini. So all these powerful empires and men have come and gone. Only a name is there now. Nothing is remaining. So I came to your country, America. I decided to come here because I heard your country is very nice, and when I came here I saw actually that your country is very nice—your cities, your buildings. Your men also—because mostly my students are Americans, and they help me very kindly to push on this movement.

“So I have studied the American life very nicely. They have a good heart. The only thing that is wanting is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For want of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness, despite all your opulences, you are becoming confused and frustrated. I hear that out of three, one man is a patient of a psychiatrist. Why? Why are you unhappy? Why should you be unhappy? You have got everything—enough food, land, money, intelligence. Why should you be unhappy? The cause of this you should try to find out. The cause is that without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without God consciousness, nobody can be happy.”

The outdoor audience was now quiet and attentive. Prabhupāda spoke for about forty minutes, ranging over different areas of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy, and concluded with a request to the American men and women to seriously cooperate in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thereby find happiness. His talk was greeted with cheers, and the devotees continued to host the crowd throughout the afternoon, chanting and dancing and distributing *prasādam*.

An Indian visitor was explaining to Prabhupāda why India had to build up nuclear weapons and armed forces, but Prabhupāda disagreed. The reason, he said, was the dearth of genuine *kṣātrīyas*. There were no more men of courage; therefore a woman was now in charge.

In the newspapers also had been much coverage of a U.S. merchant ship, the *Mayaguez*, which, when sailing within the twelve-mile limit of Cambodia, had been seized without warning. President Ford had taken a strong stand, sending in the U.S. Marines. Fifteen Marines had been

killed and fifty wounded in recovering the vessel, and the U.S. had bombed Cambodia. It was proper, Prabhupāda said, for the U.S. to take a strong stand in defending its citizens abroad. "Yes, America should be strong," he asserted. "But first of all they should become Kṛṣṇa conscious. If they were actually a Kṛṣṇa conscious nation, they should declare, 'If you touch the hair of one of our men, there will be a fight.'"

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke strongly, giving the devotees a vision of a powerful America leading the world in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And this stirred within them hopes for a pure patriotism, such as in the ancient Vedic culture, when the world had been ruled by God conscious leaders.

The next morning, before going to the airport, Śrīla Prabhupāda took a walk in Balboa Park. Hearing the sweet singing of birds, he said they were happy. "They just take the fruits, and they are singing in the morning," he said.

Rāmeśvara: "But when we tell people that they may take their next birth as an animal or bird, they say that's all right, because these creatures are happier than the humans."

Prabhupāda: "But because you are rascal, you do not know that you can become *more* happy—go back home, back to Godhead. That you do not know."

Devotees liked to bring before Śrīla Prabhupāda all kinds of topics for his comment. Conversations would jump from one thing to another as devotees sometimes brought up horrendous examples of contemporary degradation or sometimes tested their own doubts by posing as agnostics. Or sometimes they would simply bring to Prabhupāda's attention ordinary sights and sounds. Whatever the topic, Prabhupāda showed the devotees how to see things from the transcendental perspective. And thus he also showed to them his own purity and humanness. When a devotee told Prabhupāda that Balboa was the first man to see the Pacific, Prabhupāda at first seemed impressed, but a moment later he scoffed, "Everyone was already there. That they do not know. The Pacific and Atlantic oceans are mentioned in Kalidāsa Kavi's book *Kumāra-sambhava*. They are all mentioned—Pacific, Atlantic oceans. These fools do not know anything. They say, 'I am the first man to come,' as if before him there was no man. Just see!"

Prabhupāda complimented the devotees on the previous day's festival in the park and advised them to hold such festivals every day. "You are

so rich," he said laughingly, "you can do it. Continual festival. Tell them, 'Come on. Take *prasādam*. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.' Just like—what is that? Who told me?—continual massage."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami: "Yes, they have twenty-four-hour massage parlors."

"Twenty-four hours," Prabhupāda said, laughing. "Similarly, twenty-four-hours free *prasādam*—come on. But they are not hungry. Not for that."

While walking to a mesdow, they came upon a man standing on his head. "Is this our man?" Prabhupāda asked.

The devotees laughed and replied, "No, *yoga*."

"He wants to be immortal," said Rāmeśvara.

"No," said Prabhupāda. "This keeps them healthy."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "It's good for the body?"

Prabhupāda: "Yes, *śīrṣāsana* it is called, sitting on the head. *Śīrṣāsana*, *padmāsana*, *yogāsana*—there are so many *āsanas*."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "We don't practice those."

"Yes, we have no time from sleeping," said Prabhupāda sarcastically. The devotees laughed at his cutting remark. "Otherwise," Prabhupāda continued, "this is not bad. This is not bad. It keeps good health, this *yoga-āsana*."

Hearing Prabhupāda's surprising praise of *haṭha yoga*, a devotee asked the inevitable—"So if we have time, can we do that?"

By now they had finished their walk and had arrived back at the cars. Śrīla Prabhupāda chuckled, as if aware that he was being baited with a controversial question. "Hare Kṛṣṇa," he said. On getting into the car, he added, "Not required."

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Dallas

July 28, 1975

"Swami, why are you here?" asked a reporter at the Dallas—Forth Worth Airport.

"This is my home," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. The reply delighted his disciples. "I have got so many children, grandchildren. So I have come to see them."

Śrīla Prabhupāda had written about Dallas Gurukula in his commentary on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, he had written, was training a new generation of Vaiṣṇavas in its own school in Dallas, Texas.

More than a hundred boys and girls were now enrolled, and Śrīla Prabhupāda liked to visit here whenever he toured the United States. Here, as in other ISKCON projects in the U.S., he involved himself little in the management, but he visited, making himself available to the teachers, who were always ready with questions. Since there was no precedent in the West for Kṛṣṇa conscious education, and since the devotees wanted to develop the school just as Prabhupāda desired, they felt they had to ask him about curriculum, teaching methods, hygiene, recreation, and so on.

In the one hundred degree weather, the schoolboys wore no shirts, and Śrīla Prabhupāda ran the electric fan in his room. As soon as he arrived in his quarters, he asked that all the children and adults come into his room, and one by one they entered his room, held out a hand, and Prabhupāda gave them a large *rasagūla*. That evening he sat in a rocking chair on the lawn behind the temple, while devotees fanned him with a large peacock fan and locusts droned loudly in the trees. He sat there with his disciples amid many thriving *tulasī* plants, listening to a reading from the *Kṛṣṇa* book. This was as much a lesson in how to conduct a *gurukūla* as were his answers to the teachers' intricate questions. At Gurukūla, everything should be based on chanting and hearing about Kṛṣṇa.

Brahmānanda Swamī was reading about Kṛṣṇa's rescuing His beloved Rukmīṇī, when suddenly Śrīla Prabhupāda interrupted and said that when they had been escaping on Kṛṣṇa's chariot and the other princes had been attacking, Rukmīṇī had taken the reins and had driven the chariot. Kṛṣṇa had then taken His bow and arrows and had defeated His opponents. The devotees were amazed. Many of them were keen students of *Kṛṣṇa* book, and nowhere was that particular detail mentioned. Never before had any of them heard of Rukmīṇī's taking the reins, nor had they ever thought of her in that way. But Prabhupāda assured them that she had fearlessly driven Kṛṣṇa's chariot during the fight.

While Prabhupāda was speaking, Dayānanda, the Gurukūla headmaster, stretched out his leg to find a more comfortable position, and Prabhupāda turned to him and said sternly, "Do not put your feet near *Tulasī*. She is a pure devotee."

When Brahmānanda read a prayer in the *Kṛṣṇa* book describing Kṛṣṇa as the creator of the material elements, Prabhupāda spoke up. "If we do not accept that Kṛṣṇa made the sky," he challenged, "then who made it?" The blue of the Texas sky was now fading into twilight, and guests and devotees alike looked up at the sky and then back to Prabhupāda.

"According to *Bhagavad gītā*," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Kṛṣṇa made the sky—*bhūmir āpo 'nalo iāyuh kham*. So we should study like this—*aham sarvasya prabhavaḥ*. The sky is the greatest material thing, but He created it. In this way, study Kṛṣṇa. Not just studying Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs*—then you will misunderstand. But the more you understand Kṛṣṇa, the more you will become His staunch follower. Unauthorized persons never paint Kṛṣṇa creating the sky. They always want to see Kṛṣṇa dancing with the *gopīs*, and in this way they try to support their own lusty activities."

Two Dallas newspapers had covered Prabhupāda's arrival. The *Dallas Times Herald* printed a photo of Śrīla Prabhupāda seated and garlanded with roses, his right hand raised, his index finger extended, instructing. "Barefoot swami draws admiring Krishna crowd," the headline read.

Aside from claiming that Śrīla Prabhupāda was barefoot (actually he had worn shoes but had removed them when sitting cross-legged), the article pointed out a controversy around the Kṛṣṇa devotees in Dallas. The article cited ISKCON's injunction against officials of the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport, who had forbidden them to distribute literature and take donations.

On hearing the article, Śrīla Prabhupāda had commented, "This is good literature. It should be encouraged." By reading it, people would become sane, and they would understand their constitutional position. Otherwise the people would go on being perturbed by crime and wondering what to do.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was particularly interested in the newspaper's version of his reply to the question about Indian politics.

... the Swami replied that, "Mrs. Gandhi is inclined to some spiritual understanding, and if she fully develops it the situation will improve.

"Democracy is not much beneficial if its leaders have no spiritual values. Mahatma Gandhi was practically a dictator, but he was a man of a high moral character, so people accepted him. Dictatorship can be good, provided the dictator is spiritually developed."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was repeatedly being asked about Indira Gandhi. The U.S. government was critical of her newly instituted emergency rule, and particularly in Chicago, the reporters had tried to construe Prabhupāda's comments about women as criticism of Prime Minister Gandhi. Both in

Chicago and Dallas Śrīla Prabhupāda had stressed that he was not much concerned with politics, although he indicated that politics were useless without Kṛṣṇa.

Eager to keep good relations with the Indian government, Prabhupāda did not like to speak publicly against India's leaders. He had often expressed a desire to meet with the Prime Minister to assure her of the good work the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was doing for the benefit of India and the whole world, and to request her assistance. In India, visas had always been a problem for the devotees. They had to continually leave the country and their service to renew their visas and then reenter, at great cost. Now some devotees, especially in the Māyāpur area, were being asked to leave the country because of America's stance against Indira Gandhi's political actions. Recently Prabhupāda had received word from the devotees in Delhi that they were trying to arrange such a meeting. So he liked the favorable statements on Indira Gandhi in the *Dallas Times Herald* and asked that the article be saved.

While walking near White Rock Lake the morning he was to leave for New Orleans, Śrīla Prabhupāda dropped behind the main group of devotees and said to his servant, "I am not feeling well." The few *sannyāsīs* close by pressed in near him with concern. "Yesterday also," he added.

"Is it due to the heat, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

"I do not know why, but now I am feeling headache and some spasm."

"Should we cancel the trip this morning?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't answer. He admitted, however, the heat may have weakened his digestion. When asked if the food was to his liking, he replied, "Not very all right. Constantly change of hand is not good." Brahmānanda Swami suggested that another difficulty for health was the constant flying, but when he again suggested postponing the flight to New Orleans, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "No, no," and continued forward.

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July 31

The weather was stormy en route to New Orleans. Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the first-class section with Upendra, was looking out the window when the "Fasten Your Seat Belt" announcement came, just ten minutes before the scheduled landing.

Suddenly the plane dropped violently. Passengers screamed and clutched their armrests, bracing themselves. Upendra, frightened speechless, thought, *If I have to die, it's all right, because Prabhupāda is here.* The downward plunge stopped abruptly, but then the plane began to lurch and roll, tossed by turbulent air currents. Overhead bins snapped open, and articles fell out, bouncing off passengers and onto the floor. Śrīla Prabhupāda turned to Upendra. "Why is it rocking?" he asked.

"It's a storm," replied Upendra. He could see that Śrīla Prabhupāda was calm. His expression was one of irritation, like over some minor incident, as when his lunch would be served late.

In wind and downpour, the pilot finally touched the wheels onto the runway, landing without mishap. A sigh rose from the passengers, then cheering and applause. Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed unaffected. He asked Upendra how long a drive it would be to the temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda and his party arrived at the large mansion on Esplanade Boulevard in heavy rain. Nityānanda, the New Orleans temple president, having been given two weeks' notice of Prabhupāda's visit, had hurriedly repainted and readied all the buildings, both here and at the Mississippi farm. Despite a thorough search of the city's markets, however, he had been unable to find any bitter melon, which he had heard Śrīla Prabhupāda took daily for digestion. Therefore he had arranged for one of Prabhupāda's secretaries to bring some from Dallas. Nityānanda and the New Orleans devotees felt they were as ready for Prabhupāda's visit as they would ever be.

A wide marble staircase led up to the entrance, and Prabhupāda, leaning on his cane, climbed it slowly, as devotees threw flower petals down from the third floor. The entire distance from the car to the house, about 250 feet, was covered with a three foot wide white cloth, leading up to the *vyāsāsana*. Prabhupāda bowed down before the Deities of Gaura Nityānanda, Rādhā Rādhakānta, and Lord Jagannātha, sat down, but then decided it was too late in the morning to speak. Instead, he went at once to his quarters in the building next door.

As soon as Śrīla Prabhupāda reached his room, he was introduced to an official from City Hall who had come from the mayor's office to present him with an honorary welcome to New Orleans. Prabhupāda graciously accepted a symbolic key to the city and a scroll welcoming and praising him as an honorable visitor. Seizing the opportunity, he began preaching

to the man, treating his guest not as a city official but as any other conditioned soul

When the welcoming flurry had abated and Śrīla Prabhupāda had bathed, taken *prasadam*, and rested, he called for Nityananda. When Nityananda entered, Prabhupāda had sandalwood pulp on his forehead and wore a fresh garland. Nityananda offered obeisances. Alone in the room with his spiritual master, he felt embarrassed and fearful. Prabhupāda picked up a photo album from his desk containing pictures of the farm in Mississippi. "You know," he said, "I have come especially to see your farm."

Before sunrise the next morning Śrīla Prabhupāda left in the rain on a two hour drive to the farm. He would have to return to New Orleans that night, as he was scheduled to fly to Detroit the next morning.

The rain had stopped in Carriere, Mississippi, and Śrīla Prabhupāda looked out across the gently rolling land. The ISKCON farm—cleared land, surrounded by a pine forest—was situated on a ridge. The previous owner had used the property as a horse ranch, and the modern fourteen-room brick house, the large barn, and several sheds were all in good condition. Prabhupāda liked the land. He said it looked just like Bengal.

Most of the devotees from New Orleans had raced to the farm to be with Prabhupāda, and they crowded into the temple room, waiting for him to give the morning *Bhagavatam* class. As soon as he began to speak, however, many flies came, buzzing, landing on his head and body. A devotee began fanning him with a *camara* whisk, but to no avail.

"Come near," Prabhupāda said. "This *cāmara* is especially meant for driving away the flies. Even it is touching the body, there is no harm."

Toward the end of the lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda began speaking of the farm. "Now this place, I see, although I have not seen all, it is a nice place. The *grhasthas* may come here, have some small cottage, grow your own food grains and vegetables, and have your own cow's milk. Get nice foodstuff, and save time. Why should you go into the city hundreds of miles in a car and again hundreds of miles back and take unnecessary trouble? Stick to this spot and grow your own food, make your own cloth, and live peacefully. Save time and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. This is actual life.

"What is this nonsense life—big, big cities, and all these people busy? To see a friend he has to go thirty miles. If he has to see a physician, he has to go fifty miles. If he has to go to work, another hundred miles

So what is this life? This is not life. Be satisfied. A devotee's life should be *prayojana*. We require material necessities—as much as is required. No artificial life."

Śrīla Prabhupāda went on to deprecate the life of "simply machine, machine, machine." He asked the devotees to show by practical example how to live simply and advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If they could show the example, people would try to follow.

Although Nityānanda and the others had been living on the land for many months, Prabhupāda's words gave them the real direction and purpose for the project. It was as if he were now breathing life into his project.

Śrīla Prabhupāda went to his room and sat with Brahmānanda Swami, Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, Harikeśa, Jagadīśa, and Upendra. When he began speaking about *torṇāśrama*, he called for Nityānanda. They should try not to use machines, he said. The men and animals should do the work.

Nityānanda asked whether the householders should produce food cooperatively or as individual families. "They should work together," said Prabhupāda, "or what's the use of living in a community center?"

When Upendra asked how the milk should be used, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained what he called the Indian village system. "As Nanda Mahārāja was keeping cows," he said, "similarly there are many villages. They have a big pan, and whatever milk is collected they put into that pan. It is kept on a fire and is warm. So the whole family can drink milk whenever they like. Then whatever milk remains at night, they have to convert it into yogurt. The next day they use milk and yogurt also as they like. Then after converting the milk into yogurt, whatever remains is stored. If there is sufficient old yogurt, they churn, and then butter comes out. They take that butter, and the water separated from the butter is called whey. So instead of *dāl*, they use this whey for eating with *capāṭṭis*. It will be very healthy and tasty. Meanwhile, the butter they turn into *ghee*. There is not a single drop of waste."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that everyone could take as much milk as necessary and that the *ghee* could be used in ISKCON restaurants in the cities. Curd could also be used in the restaurants for making *sandesho*, *rasagulā*, and other dishes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda stressed that the farm be well organized, engaging all classes of men—*brāhmanas*, *kṣātrīyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *sūdras*. No laziness or unemployment. "Otherwise," he said, "people will criticize that we are simply eating and sleeping and escaping."

Nityānanda asked whether they should immediately stop using farm machinery.

"We are not against the machine," Prabhupāda explained. "You can utilize machine. But we should not allow others to be unemployed while we use the machine. This is the point. You can use the machine, but the first thing is that everyone should be employed. If you have got many men, then why should you engage the machine?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda also explained that in Vedic culture, the *ksatriyas* collected taxes and protected the citizens while the *śūdras* worked in the fields or at trade. The women would cook, spin, weave, and take care of the milk products. The low-class men, such as cobblers, who used the skin of dead cows, were allowed to eat meat. "But not that one is Professor Such-and-such and yet he is eating meat," Prabhupāda said. "This is the way of the degraded modern society. Teacher means *brāhmaṇa*, and yet he is eating meat. How horrible! So do these things and organize. I can give you the idea, but I will not live very long. If you can carry it out, you can change the whole world. Especially if you can change America, then the whole world will change."

Śrīla Prabhupāda became emotional, and tears came to his eyes. "It is the duty!" he said. "Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained, *para-upakāra*: Save them! If it is not possible to save everyone—as many as possible. This is human life. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness—to save those who are in the darkness.

"Don't think," he said, "'Kṛṣṇa consciousness is my profession. I am getting a living, food, and shelter.' That is just what the Indians are doing. Not like that. It is *para-upakāra*. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then Kṛṣṇa will be very much pleased. Kṛṣṇa personally comes for giving this benefit to the people, and if you do, then how much Kṛṣṇa will be pleased. Just like I am traveling to my centers, and if I see that my students, my men, are doing very nice, everything is going nice, how much pleased I will be. Then I can save my labors and now write books for the rest of my life. Similarly, if Kṛṣṇa sees that you are, on behalf of Kṛṣṇa, trying to save these rascals, then you will very much please Kṛṣṇa. The Vaiṣṇava's qualification is *para-duḥkha-duḥkḥ*. He is unhappy seeing others' distress. This is a Vaiṣṇava." Śrīla Prabhupāda ended the intimate meeting by rising and leaving the room.

When Harikeśa mentioned that he was spending two-and-a-half hours to cook Śrīla Prabhupāda's lunch, Prabhupāda said, "You do not know how to cook. I will show you and do it in one hour."

"One hour?" said Harikeśa, almost in disbelief. "This is amazing!"

Prabhupāda then took off his shirt and entered the little kitchen of the Mississippi farm. While a crowd of devotees peered in through the open door, Prabhupāda looked at his wristwatch and announced, "It is now twelve o'clock."

He used the same three-tiered brass cooker he had brought to America in 1965. In the bottom section he put mung beans and water, in the middle section he put rice, and in the top he arranged various cut vegetables—squash, peas, potatoes, and cauliflower. Putting the cooker over a low flame, he then poured an inch of *ghee* into a frying pan and placed it over a flame. Next he cut up an eggplant, dipped the pieces into turmeric and salt, and began to fry them in the hot *ghee*. He mixed and kneaded dough and began rolling out *capāṭṭis*. Periodically he checked his wristwatch, and when forty-five minutes had passed, he took the cooker's top off and turned it upside down to use as a small frying pan. He put in *ghee* and cooked some bitter melon, then deftly added cumin, anise, chili, and asafoetida. He squeezed lemon on the steamed vegetables and, within a few minutes, had finished.

Śrila Prabhupāda looked at his watch. "One hour," he said. "We have cooked nine preparations." He then left the kitchen while his servant prepared his plate. Prabhupāda said that everyone who had watched him cook should be given some of the *prasādam*.

About five in the afternoon, Prabhupāda toured the farm. In the barn he saw the calves taking milk.

"How are you using the bulls?" he asked.

Like a hesitant student, Nityānanda replied, "To plow?"

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "to plow and transport. You have to engage more men for plowing. Two bulls may be used for each plow."

Passing by a hayfield, Prabhupāda asked why the cut hay still lay in the field. Nityānanda explained that he had to wait for it to dry after the rain. Prabhupāda warned that rain could spoil the hay; it should be harvested soon. Coming upon a three-acre plot of sugarcane, they walked up one row and entered deep into the cane patch, which stood several feet above their heads. Emerging on the other side, they came to the edge of a forest of pine.

"These jungles are natural arrangement," said Prabhupāda. "You cut the trees, make your home, and the balance of it you can make for fuel. Then the ground you can plow and grow your own food. That's all. It's

natural." Prabhupāda lamented modern society's waste of trees by printing heaps of useless newspapers. He saw the two acres of fruit trees the devotees had planted—satsumas, peaches, pears, and figs—as well as the twenty-five large pecan trees.

But he discovered discrepancies. Nityānanda had lined up for Prabhupāda's inspection two tractors, a large forage harvester, a hay conditioner, hay mowers, rakes, a blower, and a wagon. But when Prabhupāda saw the machines standing in the open, he asked why they were not being kept under cover. Nityānanda replied that they were still building a shed.

"In the meantime it will be finished," said Prabhupāda. "By the time you finish your shed, they will be rusty and gradually become useless." He quoted a Hindi proverb and translated. "A woman was dressing to go to a fair, but when she was finally dressed, the fair was already finished." The devotees laughed, but Nityānanda was grave.

Prabhupāda continued: "Utilize these machines, otherwise, while they are in working order, sell them. But don't keep idle in this neglected way."

Nityānanda showed Prabhupāda where twenty-five acres of sorghum was growing. This grain was for the animals and when harvested would go into the silos.

"So everything is for the animals?" asked Prabhupāda. "Nothing for man?"

"The cows give us milk," explained Nityānanda.

"That's all?" asked Prabhupāda. "And you are not growing any food grains? Why?" Prabhupāda's instruction was clear. Just before the walk was over, he again asked Nityānanda, "What the oxen will do?"

"Plow the fields," Nityānanda replied, like a student having learned his lesson.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "that is wanted. Transport and plowing the fields. And unless our men are trained up in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they will think, 'What is the use of taking care of the cow? Better go to the city, earn money, and eat them.'"

This statement was similar to an instruction Prabhupāda had given in various temples after installing the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. If the devotees were not enthusiastic, he had warned, the Deity worship would deteriorate into mere ritual, until finally the devotees would resent the spiritual master's giving them such a burden. Likewise on the farms, if the devotees did not utilize the bulls in the natural way and if they did not use the milk properly, then eventually they would want to get rid of the animals. By conducting things as Prabhupāda had taught, however,

the devotees, the cows, and the bulls would live cooperatively and happily, and Kṛṣṇa would be pleased.

Although for years Śrīla Prabhupāda had given many practical instructions in other areas of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, this was one of the first times he had given so many practical directions on conducting *varṇāśrama* society. He felt satisfied and pleased to have seen such a promising Kṛṣṇa conscious farm community and, reentering the house, said he was ready to return to New Orleans. It had been a busy, productive day in the service of Kṛṣṇa, and tomorrow would be another.

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Detroit

August 2, 1975

Alfred Ford, the great-grandson of Henry Ford, had become attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness through meeting some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples in Detroit and through reading *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. He had adopted the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, begun regularly chanting sixteen rounds, and was now Śrīla Prabhupāda's initiated disciple, Ambarīṣa. Today Ambarīṣa was at the airport, behind the wheel of a white Lincoln Continental limousine, waiting to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda. On seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda approach, Ambarīṣa got out of the driver's seat and offered obeisances. He opened the back door of the limousine for Śrīla Prabhupāda, shut it, and returned to his seat, just like a menial chauffeur.

"We devotees also have a car," said Prabhupāda as they drove away, "but we are going to the temple and distributing books with it. Anything can be used for Kṛṣṇa. Here is a rich man's son, Alfred Ford. We are giving him a little spiritual teaching, and he is happy."

Another of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Detroit disciples was Elisabeth Reuther, now Lekhaśravantī-devī dāśī, the daughter of labor leader Walter Reuther. Ambarīṣa told Prabhupāda that the Fords and the Reuthers had been enemies, but now two of their descendants were peacefully working together in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased with the humility of these two disciples, and while he gave them some special status, he did not dote on the fact that they were from such famous families. Ambarīṣa and Lekhaśravantī saw themselves as humble servants of the Vaiṣṇavas.

On the way to the temple, Prabhupāda's car passed a large, modern

building displaying flags of many nations and a large sign: "World Headquarters, Ford." One of the devotees turned to Ambarīsa and asked, "Is this where you work?"

From the back seat, Prabhupāda spoke up. "No, he is the proprietor."

As they passed by a big urban redevelopment project, Prabhupāda asked,

"What is this?"

"This is known as Detroit's Renaissance Center," said Ambarīsa.

"They will never have a renaissance," Prabhupāda replied.

The Detroit temple was located in an old brick house, with the temple room in the third-floor attic. The lease was soon due to run out, and Govardhana, the temple president, was looking for a new place. He showed Prabhupāda photos of likely buildings, one of them a mansion of the late auto industry millionaire Lawrence Fisher. The place was probably too expensive, Govardhana said, and was located in a bad neighborhood.

But Prabhupāda was interested. In fact, whatever the devotees cited as bad about the mansion, Prabhupāda would say was actually good, or at least could be easily rectified. As for the high crime rate in the area, he said, "You'll have nothing to fear. Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and distribute *prasādam*. Invite all the neighborhood people, thieves, and rascals, to take *prasādam* and chant, and you won't have any thefts."

Devotees emphasized that Detroit was the crime capital of the U.S. and that the poor slum area where the mansion was located was known for drug trafficking, robberies, and murders. But Śrīla Prabhupāda repeated that they should not be afraid. "I lived in the Bowery," he said, and he described how the bums used to urinate on his front door and lie across the doorway. But when he would come to enter the building, they would get up and say, "Yes, sir. Come on, sir."

"Get the place," Prabhupāda said, "and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa there twenty-four hours a day. If a thief comes, we will say, 'Yes, first take *prasādam*, and then take whatever you want.' What do we have?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda went to see the mansion with Govardhana, Ambarīsa, and several G.B.C. men. They were met by the owner and a lady who introduced herself as a real estate agent.

As the owner guided them on a tour, Prabhupāda came to like the estate even more. The palatial building was situated on four acres surrounded by a high stone wall. There were gardens and walkways, now in disrepair,

as well as fountains and a swimming pool. Some of the devotees thought the place gaudy, with its extravagant 1920s decor, but Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the great potential.

As soon as he entered the vestibule and saw the ornate Italian tiles and marble archways, he began to smile. The group entered the lobby, its high ceiling covered with classically sculptured leaves, rosettes, and hand-painted plaster flowers. Next they entered the ballroom, with its marble floor and high, vaulted ceiling painted to resemble an early-evening blue sky with clouds and stars. Special lighting gave the effect of natural starlight. At one end of the hall, three marble arches exactly resembled the design Prabhupāda had given for the Deity altars in his temples. Three altars could be installed there and the ballroom made into a temple with very little renovation. Prabhupāda did not comment to the owner on the ballroom's suitability, but to the devotees it was obvious.

The tour then proceeded to the boat well, an indoor water garage capable of holding several yachts. The boat well opened into a channel, which opened into the nearby Detroit River. Prabhupāda mentioned that the devotees could get a boat for their preaching.

As Prabhupāda and his entourage entered one gorgeous room after another, they saw the many carved stone columns, hand-painted floor and wall tiles from Italy and Greece, and ceilings ornamented with gold-leafed figures. Rare antique crystal chandeliers adorned many of the rooms. There were living rooms, library rooms, a dining room, a billiard room, a music room, two master bedrooms, other bedrooms—all extravaganzas. "Each room is worth the entire price," said Prabhupāda privately to the devotees.

The owner spoke of Mayan, Moorish, Spanish, Greek, and Italian influences, and pointed out that the two hand-carved spiral columns in the dining room were salvaged from an ancient European palace. Wherever Śrīla Prabhupāda looked, he saw opulence: an indoor marble fountain, a wall of iridescent tiles, hand-painted cornices. Even the large bathrooms were extraordinary, with glamorous imported tiles and gold-plated accents.

The introductory tour completed, Prabhupāda, his followers, the owner, and the real estate agent sat together at an umbrella-covered patio table by the swimming pool. Already Śrīla Prabhupāda had mentioned to his disciples that the owner should donate the building for ISKCON's missionary purposes, and he had told Brahmānanda Swami to make the request. Since the owner had not mentioned the price, Prabhupāda spoke up.

"So, we are beggars," he began. He was serious, and yet he spoke with

an air of humor. Ambarīṣa and Upendra hid their faces in embarrassment. "We have no money," Prabhupāda continued boldly. "Therefore, we are asking you, please give us this building."

The owner glanced incredulously at his real estate agent and then laughed nervously. "It's out of the question," he said. "I can't do that."

The agent was also taken aback and upset. "He can't do that," she whispered.

"I can't give it to you," explained the owner, "because I have taken a loss in maintaining this property. So I have to make my money back. This property represents a major part of my income."

"Then," said Prabhupāda, "how much do you want?"

"Well," the man replied, "I have to get at least \$350,000."

None of the devotees dared say anything. Prabhupāda thought for a moment and then said, "We will give you \$300,000 cash."

"I'll have to think about it," the man replied.

The real estate agent got to her feet, saying that a transaction like this is usually not done straight to the owner. But Prabhupāda ignored her and spoke with the owner about how lovely the mansion was. Prabhupāda then got up and took a short walk in the garden with his men.

Govardhana asked Prabhupāda if he'd liked it, and Prabhupāda said, "Yes, who would not like such a building?"

"Ambarīṣa doesn't like it," said Govardhana.

"Oh?"

Ambarīṣa said he thought the mansion was *māyā*.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "but *māyā* is also Kṛṣṇa. We can use anything in Kṛṣṇa's service."

Leaving the garden path and returning to their cars, Prabhupāda asked Ambarīṣa, "So, is this possible?"

"Yes, Prabhupāda. This is possible."

As soon as they returned to the temple, Ambarīṣa and Lekhāśravantī conferred. Her inheritance was limited, but she was able to give \$125,000. Ambarīṣa had to come up with the balance.

The next day the owner came to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. The man was accompanied by two women, and they all appeared a little intoxicated. He had come to say that he accepted the offer. Prabhupāda smiled and reaffirmed his intention to buy.

Afterward, Śrīla Prabhupāda openly showed his blissfulness about the purchase. "Just see," he said, "I didn't have one penny, and yet I offered him \$300,000 cash. And now Kṛṣṇa has provided the money."

As Prabhupāda had told the estate owner, "I am a *sannyāśī*. I have no money." And after collecting \$300,000 from his disciples, he still had no money. Within a few days he left for Toronto, taking nothing for himself. Everything was Kṛṣṇa's, to be used in Kṛṣṇa's service.

Toronto

August 7, 1975

Despite a severe toothache and swollen jaw, Śrīla Prabhupāda continued with lectures, interviews, and his usual activities. He could not chew and took only puréed fruit. When asked if he would see a dentist, he told the devotees not to worry; he was used to difficulties.

The Toronto temple was a small, run-down building, and Prabhupāda was interested in helping the devotees relocate. All the real estate brokers they had approached had told them about a fabulous church for sale downtown. The temple president, Viśvakarmā, had looked at the building, but the owners were asking almost half a million dollars, with a large down payment. When Prabhupāda went to see the church, he decided that somehow they must get it. If necessary he could send the total BBT collections for two months as a loan to the Toronto temple. Prabhupāda told them to offer \$300,000 cash, but when Uttamaśloka went, the church directors rejected the offer, saying they had already rejected an offer for much more.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not give up the idea of getting the church, however, and he mentioned it before a meeting of Indians. Near the end of the program, when the host begged Prabhupāda to return again to bless them, Prabhupāda took the opportunity to request all present to please help the devotees raise money to purchase the church. Once they had actually purchased it, he said, he would return to Toronto. Many of the gentlemen present promised to help.

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Suddenly, Śrīla Prabhupāda's North American tour was interrupted. A telegram from Tejās in New Delhi announced that if Prabhupāda wanted an interview with Indira Gandhi, he would have to come at once. The telegram contained no details, and his secretary was unable to reach the Delhi temple by phone. But Prabhupāda didn't need to hear anything

more. When an auspicious opportunity arose, he said, a devotee should act at once.

Harikeśa planned the trip so they could stop in Montreal overnight. From Montreal they would fly to Paris, where Prabhupāda could rest before going on to Delhi. As word of Prabhupāda's imminent departure spread, several devotees in Toronto tried to see Prabhupāda for last instructions about their projects. Rāmeśvara also phoned from Los Angeles, pressing Harikeśa to ask Prabhupāda a list of last-minute editorial questions regarding the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The questions, however, concerning the *Bhāgavatam*'s explanation of the structure of the universe, Prabhupāda rejected as unintelligent. He ordered the BBT to simply print the books as they were.

Not only was the prospect of meeting with Prime Minister Gandhi prompting Prabhupāda's return to India, but so were his uncompleted projects, especially Hare Krishna Land in Bombay. Brahmananda Swami said he thought Prabhupāda had been looking for such a chance to end his Western tour and get back into personally managing the projects in India. Prabhupāda had just dictated a letter to Surabhi in Vṛndāvana, expressing disappointment that things could not get done without him.

You are all simply writing letters to me. Without my personal presence there you cannot do anything. Simply correspondence. Anyway, be careful there is no underhanded dealing in this transaction [purchasing land]. It is very much risky, so be careful. Please send me a regular report of the Bombay construction. I am very much anxious and will be glad to receive your regular report.

Devotees in Boston, New Vrindaban, and New York received the news of Prabhupāda's sudden departure with shock—he would not be visiting their temples! And they felt the impact of the stark realization that Śrīla Prabhupāda could leave them at any moment. He was not obliged to stay with them, and they should not take his presence for granted. They had his instructions; this was sufficient. Of course, important decisions still had to be made. In Boston the devotees had expected Prabhupāda to look at a new building with them; but based on his instruction, they could become responsible and carry out his will, even in his absence.

The devotees who had recently received Prabhupāda in their temples realized how valuable had been those moments. The personal association they had had should be relished, remembered, and acted upon. The book

distributors already knew that their work was most important to Prabhupāda, and that was sufficient. The Press workers in Los Angeles weren't dependent on Prabhupāda's staying in America; they had their mission—seventeen books in two months—and they were working day and night.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's traveling in the U.S. and Canada had been exactly in the mood of a wandering *sannyāsi*. And he was showing his G.B.C. men that they should not simply sit behind desks and manage but should travel and preach. Traveling, Prabhupāda stressed, did not mean aimless wandering or pleasure-seeking. While traveling, the preacher had to do some substantial work for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society. And that also Śrīla Prabhupāda had shown—at the Dallas Gurukula, the Mississippi farm, Ratha-yātrā. In Detroit he had secured a mansion, and in Toronto he was praying for a wonderful church, to be financed by the Indians. In Chicago he had shown how to preach on contemporary issues like crime and women's liberation—without compromise. His disciples could not match or imitate him, but his example of selfless work on behalf of Kṛṣṇa should be their standard.

In spite of Prabhupāda's traveling to so many cities, most people in the United States did not recognize his position. Reporters would interview him, but their superficial stories in the newspapers drew little attention. To the press, Prabhupāda was just another celebrity in the constant parade of faces and events. As Lord Kṛṣṇa had predicted in *Bhagavad-gītā*, out of thousands of men, only one seeks perfection. Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his tireless search for that one person out of thousands, had shown his enthusiasm and willingness to speak with whoever came to see him. And through Ratha-yātrā and other public festivals, he was offering millions a first taste of potent spiritual life. Even one moment's association with a pure devotee could save them from a most inauspicious fate in their next life.

Besides the hundreds of thousands who benefited incidentally, in each city a fortunate few felt their lives greatly affected by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Professor Thomas Hopkins in Philadelphia, Assemblyman John Porter in Chicago, a flight supervisor on the plane to San Francisco, an appreciative mother in Philadelphia, and many others—all understood that their meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda was special.

Śrīla Prabhupāda often cited a specific reason for his touring. "My duty," he had said in Berkeley, "is to see that my disciples, who have accepted me as *guru*, may not fall down. That is my anxiety." And as be

had lovingly expressed it in Dallas, "I have got so many children and grandchildren, so I have come to see them" He was the spiritual father of his disciples, and every ISKCON center was his home

While touring his movement in the West, Śrīla Prabhupada had felt satisfied that it was growing stronger Opposition was also growing, but he took that as another sign of ISKCON's authenticity His original plan was still intact, and on this tour he had been pursuing it America had a chance of becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious—at least he and his disciples should try for that If they succeeded, then the whole world could be uplifted by that transcendental influence

Prabhupada liked preaching in America "Mostly my students are American," he had said, "and they help me very kindly push on this movement" But one man in the San Diego crowd had shouted back that he wanted more sex than was allowed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness So Prabhupada's estimation was that Americans had good hearts, but that for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness they were becoming completely confused, frustrated, and degraded

Śrīla Prabhupada had come first to America in 1965 to plant the seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness That he had done Now, with dozens of centers across the country and many others around the world, he was realizing that his ambitions were not going unfulfilled He also accepted that to make Kṛṣṇa consciousness the dominant force in America and the world was something he might not see in his lifetime "It is not one man's work," he had said, and he asked everyone—Americans, Indians, and all world citizens—to take part in distributing Lord Caitanya's mercy

Only a rare few came forward to help him, however, and he worked with them Touring, therefore, was but another attempt at making his organization as strong as possible while it was within his power to do so Actually, he was living for others, and he didn't think he would live much longer He wanted to continue touring, building ISKCON, saving as many lost souls as possible And he wanted to impress upon his sincere followers and upon others who would read his books that every human being should take up this same work and live for the benefit of others by distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness

CHAPTER FOUR

At Home in India

There were, of course, other reasons for Prabhupāda's returning to India besides meeting Indira Gandhi. His regular rhythm had become to alternate touring the West with staying in India. He was leading his movement by traveling from center to center, but for at least five years now, he had devoted more of his time to India.

His ambitious projects in Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana, although increasing the prestige of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, were by no means completed. And Hare Krishna Land in Bombay was still only a construction site. Unlike in America and Europe, where Śrīla Prabhupāda achieved his objectives by inspiring disciples to carry on the management, in India he was the manager. He had to be; otherwise his Western disciples would be cheated and become dispirited. Pressing managerial decisions, therefore, brought him frequently to India.

Moreover, he had a special inclination to be in India. He had a deep spiritual attraction to the holy *dhāmas*—Vṛndāvana was his home and Māyāpur was his place of worship—and he liked the unique opportunities for meeting and influencing people in places like Bombay. His upcoming meeting with India's chief executive was the kind of opportunity that came rarely in the West.

And in addition to all these reasons Prabhupāda also felt most relaxed and at home there. When breaking some of his commitments to visit more cities in the U.S., he had written to a disciple, "I was not able to come to Atlanta because I was called here to India on urgent business. Also I was feeling inconvenienced by so much traveling." Prabhupāda often referred to New York, London, and Los Angeles as his special homes and

to America as his fatherland. And when a disciple had once remarked that Prabhupāda would feel more at home in India, he had replied, "My only home is the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa." Nevertheless, for whatever reason or combination of reasons, Śrīla Prabhupāda was showing a definite preference for staying in India.

Prabhupāda was displeased to see how slowly the construction was progressing at Hare Krishna Land in Bombay. The monsoons had flooded the foundation, and what little work had been done appeared to be of poor quality. The whole project should have been finished in six months, Prabhupāda said, but he startled the devotees by saying, "At least complete it within my lifetime."

Surabhi and Mūrti showed him drawings for other temples. An interested person in Nellore, near Hyderabad, was speaking of donating land, and the devotees had drawn up plans for a temple complex, complete with library and dormitories. Prabhupāda approved the plans. The temple buildings, he said, should be traditional, according to the sastric directions, but the other buildings could incorporate more modern designs. He also studied and approved plans for temples in Hyderabad and Fiji.

Early the next morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for Surabhi and Mūrti and again went over their various plans with detailed interest. He had little time left before his meeting with the prime minister, however, and the next day he left for Delhi.

New Delhi

August 22, 1975

At 9-15 in the morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda and several of his leading disciples arrived at the prime minister's home, where they were confronted by a formidable security check. Two days before, the prime minister of Bangladesh had been assassinated, and Mrs. Gandhi was rumored to be next. Armed soldiers, therefore, surrounded her residence. The guards at the outer gate decided that the foreigners could not go in, Śrīla Prabhupāda alone could enter. While one guard opened the gate, another ushered Śrīla Prabhupāda into a car, which carried him to the prime minister's front door.

Meanwhile, the devotees waited in anxiety by the outer gate. Always some disciples would accompany Prabhupāda wherever he went, his disciples worried, almost like doting parents, that he might need their assistance.

In tiny, cramped handwriting, Śrīla Prabhupāda had noted down in a small address book a list of points he wanted to discuss with Mrs. Gandhi.

1. Grant immigration for 500 foreigners.
2. All M.P.'s initiated brahmanas.
3. Sanjaya the King.
4. Close slaughterhouses.
5. Chanting.
6. Meat-eaters—at home. No public meat-eating.
7. Prostitution punishable.
8. No religious group except Bhagavad Gita as it is.
9. All government officers must join kirtan at least twice a day.
10. Support Krishna consciousness all over the world.

The most pressing item was at the head of the list: Mrs. Gandhi should grant permanent visas to Prabhupāda's Western disciples in India. Just a few weeks before, some of the foreign devotees in Māyāpur had been asked to leave the country. For years Prabhupāda had been asking for permanent visas whenever he met governors, members of Parliament, or other men of influence. Devotees were constantly being asked to leave the country to renew their six-month visas. The travel costs incurred and the disruption of the devotees' services seriously hampered ISKCON's work in India; therefore, Prabhupāda wanted Indira Gandhi to sanction up to five hundred foreign disciples to stay permanently in India.

The other points on Śrīla Prabhupāda's list were scriptural directions for how the prime minister could make her leadership Kṛṣṇa conscious, in the spirit of the great *rājorṣis* of the Vedic age. These were the same tenets of God conscious leadership he preached wherever he went, and he had deep conviction that if the world's leaders would apply them, an era of peace, prosperity, and happiness would dawn. Indira Gandhi had a tendency toward authoritative control, so she should exercise it in terms of Vedic directions. Then her rule could become most effective and beneficial.

A government official opened the door to Śrīla Prabhupāda's car, ushered him into the house, and brought him before the prime minister. As Prabhupāda entered the room, Mrs. Gandhi stood up. Although she greeted him cordially and offered him a seat, he could immediately detect that she was distracted, fearful for her life. She openly admitted it, and added that this was not, therefore, a good time for their meeting. Prabhupāda felt that she would have preferred not to meet at all, but was allowing it only because she had promised. Her agreeing to see him, he

felt, was an indication that she had some attraction for spiritual life, but he understood that on this visit at least, he could not introduce the extensive advice he had been contemplating.

Mrs. Gandhi complimented Śrīla Prabhupāda on the work he was doing all over the world. "They are good boys," he replied, and he asked if she could arrange for permanent visas. She agreed, but again mentioned her present anxiety. They soon ended their talk, and Śrīla Prabhupāda left.

A few days later, while still in New Delhi, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a letter from Rāmeśvara. The BBT in Los Angeles was miraculously fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's order to publish seventeen volumes in two months. The composers, editors, artists, and workers had ecstatically finished their marathon—on schedule! When the first books had come back from the printers and had been offered on the altar of Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhīśa, the devotees had cried in transcendental bliss, chanting again and again the *mantras* to Śrīla Prabhupāda. They were feeling the potency of the order of their spiritual master and seeing themselves as instruments in carrying out what had once seemed an impossible request.

Today our composer finished the last volumes of Caitanya-caritāmṛta. By Wednesday next week, August 20th, all volumes will be at the printer. Now they are just starting to compose the Fifth Canto, and the entire canto will definitely be at the printer by Vyasa puja day.

After promising delivery of books by October at the latest, the letter was signed by about sixty devotees: "Your unworthy servants at ISKCON Press." On their behalf, Rāmeśvara stated,

We have lost all desire to do anything except be engaged in producing and distributing your transcendental books by the millions in every town and village.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote back the next day from Delhi.

Regarding your desire for all twelve Cantos, you will get it, rest assured. Your so much ardent desire will be fulfilled by Krishna.

On August 21 Rāmeśvara sent Śrīla Prabhupāda a telegram.

BY THE MERCY OF LORD BALARAMA, NITYANANDA, THE LAST
VOLUME OF CAITANYA-CARITAMṚTA IS LEAVING TODAY FOR

THE PRINTER. BY YOUR MERCY AND DIVINE ORDER IT IS DONE.

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda traveled on to Vṛndāvana, the devotees were able to dispatch advance copies of all fifteen volumes to him by his eightieth birthday on August 31. Just after Prabhupāda observed the ceremony in the temple, a devotee arrived in Vṛndāvana with the final six volumes of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

With great relish and satisfaction Śrīla Prabhupāda examined the books. He was pleased with the artwork and quickly became absorbed in reading the pastimes of Lord Caitanya. He felt so inspired he remarked to the devotees in Vṛndāvana that he was thinking of stopping all touring and just staying in Vṛndāvana and translating. The reciprocation of the devotees at ISKCON Press was so sincere that it increased Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire to reciprocate with them. He wrote to "My dear Ramesvara and company,"

You have taken seriously the publishing and also the distribution of these books, and that is the success of our mission. You have taken seriously this work and I know that my Guru Maharaja is pleased with you because he wanted this. So by this endeavor you will all go back home, back to Godhead.

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda had mentioned that he would like to sit in Vṛndāvana and simply translate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, his stay there was characterized by intensive management, not by writing. He had presided over the grand opening of the Krishna-Balaram Mandir four months earlier, and now he would demonstrate how the temple should be run. The Krishna-Balaram Mandir was a Vedic temple complex at a famous holy place, and it was being scrutinized by persons already strongly opinionated on how a temple should be run.

Immediately Prabhupāda found discrepancies. In the guesthouse, which was for guests, not disciples, he found married disciples living with their children. This was not proper, he said, and these families would have to find other quarters nearby or leave Vṛndāvana. He also found problems with the plumbing, the municipal sewage system, the financial management, the Deity worship, the cleanliness, and the devotees' behavior.

Almost every area of temple life and every devotee required special attention. In the smallest discrepancies, Prabhupāda would sometimes see the essence of all problems, and he would instantly point it out. And because

his disciples took his words with utmost seriousness, as coming directly from Kṛṣṇa, his reprimands were often devastating.

Prabhupāda was a difficult taskmaster. A Vaiṣṇava is said to be “as soft as a rose and as hard as a thunderbolt,” but Prabhupāda began showing more the thunderbolt side of his personality. Sometimes a neophyte’s conception of the spiritual master is that he must always be peaceful and pleased with everything that happens, and that this is a sign of his being situated in transcendental consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, demonstrated many moods—including anger.

In its material form, anger (*krodha*) is described in *Bhagavad gītā* as occurring when one’s lust (*kāma*) cannot be fully satisfied. A true *sādhu*, therefore, because he does not have lusty desires, does not become possessed by anger.

The Vaiṣṇava poet Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, however, declares that anger may also be used in serving Kṛṣṇa. Narottama dāsa gives the example of Hanumān, the eternal servant of Lord Rāma, who displayed his great anger in fighting against Rāvana and the other demoniac enemies of the Lord. Rūpa Gosvāmī also wrote in the *Bhakti rasāmṛta sindhu* that a devotee should not tolerate blasphemy to Kṛṣṇa or to the Vaiṣṇavas and that his response might justifiably be transcendental anger. Even Lord Kṛṣṇa incited the anger of the nonviolent Arjuna, inducing him to fight. And that fighting was transcendental, whereas Arjuna’s reluctance to fight was material.

Among sentimentalists and impersonalists, however, the image persists that a *sādhu* should *never* show anger. When, at a large *pandal* festival in Delhi, Śrīla Prabhupāda had shown anger toward a man who spoke against Kṛṣṇa, many in the audience had misunderstood; some had even walked out.

Prabhupāda’s disciples could accept his anger. They even welcomed it—theoretically. But to bear it was difficult. The spiritual master must cut through his student’s false ego to engage that student in pure service. The *guru*’s show of anger, therefore, is good for the disciple. According to Cānakya Paṇḍita, one should not be lenient with sons and disciples. Unless he deals strictly with them, he will spoil them.

Prabhupāda’s anger in Vṛndāvana was not, however, a mere exercise in student training. He strongly desired to see the temple solidly established. He trusted that his disciples were sufficiently loyal to him to withstand the pain of chastisement and take it for what it was: mercy.

Prabhupāda was vigilant about the devotees’ attendance at the morn-

ing devotional program in the temple. Calling for the temple president, he asked why some devotees were regularly absent. *Maṅgala-ārati*, he said, was very important, and everyone must attend. Punctuality was also important. The exact time for the *maṅgala-ārati* would vary according to the clock, he said, but it must always be one-and-a-half hours before sunrise.

Prabhupāda would take his morning walk, timing it so he would be back in the temple a few moments before the Deity doors were supposed to open for *darśana*. Once when he was waiting, with all the devotees gathered around, he looked at his watch and then asked Akṣayānanda Swami, "What is the time?" Aware that Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking with exactitude, Akṣayānanda replied that it was thirty seconds after seven-thirty. Prabhupāda shook his head, and with a resigned look he said, "It is very difficult to be a *brāhmaṇa*—thirty seconds late. Why are they taking so long to dress the Deity?"

Akṣayānanda explained that the Deity dressing took about one-and-a-half hours.

"They are simply lazy," Prabhupāda replied.

"How long should it take, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

"Half an hour at most."

Akṣayānanda was flabbergasted, since he knew of no *pūjārī* who could come even close to that. He remained silent.

"What is the difficulty?" Prabhupāda challenged. "Half an hour at most."

Shortly after Prabhupāda had arrived, he had noticed that the path leading to the front gate was not clean. He had complained strongly, "Why this is not clean? It should be cleaned by the time daybreak comes. I want to see this cleaned." The temple commander, a young Englishman from Australia named Hari-śauri, was supposed to supervise all the cleaning, but he had taken much of it for himself. After hearing Prabhupāda's remarks about the pathway, Hari-śauri had resolved to rectify the problem. Immediately after *maṅgala-ārati* he would run out to the front of the temple, throw water on the stone pathways, and madly run the large squeegee over the front steps and walkway, so that by the time Prabhupāda came by, most of the area would be sparkling clean. And by the time he would return from his walk, all the outdoor walkways would be clean. Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't say anything further about the walkway, which seemed to be a positive sign.

Getting the devotees to ring the bell in the temple dome on time was a major effort for Śrīla Prabhupāda, as was getting them to ring the bell

in the temple hall at all. His desire was that the hell in the temple dome should sound the hour and ring once every half hour. The grounds watchman, or *chaukīdār*, was supposed to do it, and Gunārṇava was to see that he did. But for weeks there were problems, especially during the hours of the night, when the *chaukīdār* tended to fall asleep.

For Śrīla Prabhupāda, the undependable bell ringing revealed much about the overall temple management in Vṛndāvana. He made it clear: "I am judging the management of this temple by the ringing of the hell." If the nightwatchman was sleeping, and if the temple leaders could not execute a simple order, how would the temple and guesthouse, with all their complexities, operate smoothly? Aksayānanda Swami and Gunārṇava sometimes thought that they would never solve the problem of the bells, especially since they already had so many other things to do.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda was relentless. Whenever the hell missed by even a few minutes he would demand to know what was wrong. During the night he was usually the only one not sleeping, but he would wake Aksayānanda or others and reprimand them if the hell failed. One night at midnight he woke Harikeśa, his traveling secretary.

"Do you hear that?" demanded Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Harikeśa strained to hear. "I don't hear anything."

"You can't hear it?" repeated Prabhupāda.

"I'm sorry, but I can't hear anything."

"That's right! Go out there and wake up the *chaukīdār*, and make him ring the hell!"

Harikeśa went out into the darkness, woke the sleeping *chaukīdār*, got him to ring the hell, and then returned to sleep. And so did the *chaukīdār*.

At 12:30 Prabhupāda again rang.

"Did you hear it again?"

"No, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Harikeśa.

"So go out and wake him again!"

In addition to getting the temple dome bell to ring on time, getting both the bells to operate properly was also a problem. The bells were of heavy brass, worked by a rope. Prabhupāda wanted the bell in the temple to be rung constantly during the *ārati kīrtanas*. It took weeks for Gunārṇava to arrange it.

And the bell in the temple dome was particularly difficult, since the rope rubbed on the stone walls and soon snapped. The thicker rope Gunārṇava got simply spoiled the clarity of the chime and made the ringing uneven, which Prabhupāda immediately noticed. Gunārṇava tried a

chain—too heavy. A nylon rope—it broke. Materials were scarce in Vṛndāvana, and each change meant another delay, sometimes days. Nothing seemed to make the bell work properly.

Śrīla Prabhupāda told Gunārnava to try a pulley. Somehow Gunārnava couldn't surrender to that particular instruction. He thought the rope would just jump the track. One of the devotees did purchase a pulley, but Gunārnava said it was useless.

When Prabhupāda called Gunārnava to his room and demanded, "Where are the pulley wheels?" Gunārnava said he had sent them back. "You rascal!" Prabhupāda shouted. "I am asking for pulleys, and you are sending them back!"

Gunārnava apologized, ran out, and got a pulley. It didn't work. Then he got the idea of designing a bracket with a hole in it. The next morning Prabhupāda came out of his room and walked around to the front of the temple to check on the bell. For Gunārnava and others the whole affair was becoming unbearable.

"Let us hear the bell," said Prabhupāda.

Giving mighty tugs to the rope, a devotee rang the bell again and again.

"No, that's wrong," said Prabhupāda.

Gunārnava showed Prabhupāda the wooden bracket arrangement, and Prabhupāda thought it was a good idea. Gunārnava even tried to improve it by greasing the hole, and it worked for a while. But then the rope snapped again.

Prabhupāda's morning walks were usually filled with managerial and administrative talks, as he pointed out how the devotees could prevent being cheated, how they could save and collect money, how they could keep the temple clean, and so on. These talks were directed at specific individuals and were usually marked by criticism. Morning walks, therefore, were sometimes tense.

One morning Gunārnava invited Prabhupāda to see the new book display. In a sincere effort to please Prabhupāda, the devotees had set up a book display just inside the entrance to the temple. There were bookshelves with built-in lighting, a display case, and a counter for sales.

Showing off the book display was a triumph for the temple managers. The lights worked, and Śrīla Prabhupāda's books were neatly placed. The G.B.C. secretary for Vṛndāvana, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, was also present, telling Śrīla Prabhupāda that actually the temple was first class and

that things were now going smoothly. As Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, Akṣayananda Swami, Guṇārṇava, and others pointed out the features of the hook display, Śrīla Prabhupāda was silent, then suddenly agitated.

"You say that everything is first class," he said, "but I see that it is fifth class! Just see!" He hanged his cane on the floor and then lifted it up, pointing, "I have come six thousand miles to tell you about a bird's nest." The assembled devotees all looked up to behold a large bird's nest within the chandelier. Birds were nesting there, amid the protruding straw. Yet until now, no one had noticed the dirty, unsightly presence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had explained in his letters and books that one duty of a spiritual master is to expose the faults in his disciples—even if the fault is only slight. And the qualified disciple considers himself hereof of spiritual knowledge, always a fool before his spiritual master. He therefore considers the spiritual master's criticisms as mercy.

One day Śrīla Prabhupāda was meeting with the temple managers. He wanted practical ideas, not sentiments. He complained about overspending, in Vṛndāvana and now in Bombay also, where construction was just beginning. "You will squander money here," he said, "and Surabhi will squander money there. What is your plan to stop this? What will you do?" No one knew what to say. There was a long silence.

Finally Akṣayananda spoke up. "We will become Kṛṣṇa conscious."

"An impractical suggestion!" Prabhupāda exclaimed.

Akṣayananda Swami regularly expected the thunderbolt, but that didn't keep him from wanting to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda. On one morning walk Prabhupāda mentioned how the climate in Vṛndāvana was very harsh, both in summer and in winter. In winter, he said, the cold would sometimes be accompanied by rain.

"But Prabhupāda," said Akṣayananda, "even if it rains stool and urine and pus and blood from the sky, still we should stay in Vṛndāvana?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave an almost imperishable smile and said, "Oh, you are expecting?" The devotees burst out laughing.

Another time Akṣayananda Swami asked, "Is it true that it says in the *śāstra* that if you pass stool once a day you are a *yogi*, twice a day you are a *bhoga* [sense enjoyer] and three times a day you are a *rogi* [diseased person]?"

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, and he kept walking. After a while he added, "But don't try for passing stool once a day."

"Acchā," responded Akṣayānanda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled. "Do you think if you pass stool once a day that you are a *yogī*?"

Hari-śauri had had little personal association with his spiritual master. But one day in Vṛndāvana Prabhupāda asked to see him—to point out a serious discrepancy. As temple commander, Hari-śauri had asked an old man not to eat in front of the Deity in the temple. The old man had become upset, and a young Bengali man had defended him, shouting at Hari-śauri that he had no right to criticize anyone in the temple. Hari-śauri had attempted to ignore him, but the young Bengali had continued shouting and threatening to throw him out of the temple and cut off his *śikhā*. Finally Hari-śauri had twisted the young man's arm and had told the *chaukidār* to throw him out. Śrīla Prabhupāda soon heard of the incident and called for Hari-śauri.

"How inauspicious," Hari-śauri thought. "The first time my spiritual master has ever called for me, and it's over a bad incident like this."

Prabhupāda did not immediately reprimand him, but first asked for his version of what had happened. Hari-śauri appreciated the opportunity, and he began to tell the whole story. When he mentioned that the old man had asked to speak with an authority and that he had told him he was the temple commander, Śrīla Prabhupāda interrupted. "Hmmm." Prabhupāda gave his disciple a penetrating glance. "Temple commander does not mean commander in chief. Where have you heard this, about eating *prasādam* in front of the Deity?"

Hari-śauri could not remember an exact reference, and he became embarrassed. "Well, I thought I read it in one of your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said.

"Hmmm." Prabhupāda looked at him again. He could understand his disciple's ignorant mistake. Because of the boy's inexperience in India, he had not understood the serious implications of what he had done. Actually, because of the sensitive relationship between ISKCON devotees and the residents of Vṛndāvana, he should have tolerated the abuse. His was an ignorant mistake, but ignorance was no excuse.

"This is a great offense," said Prabhupāda. "He will go out and tell so many people that the foreigners have thrown him out. This is very bad."

Prabhupāda looked gravely at Hari-śauri. "Now you find out where this

man is staying," he said, "and you bring him back here. Invite him to come back."

Hari-śauri tried his best, looking all day for the young Bengali man, who was reportedly staying at a hotel in Mathurā. He was unsuccessful, however. Disappointed, he returned to the temple, and as soon as he returned, a devotee came and told him Prabhupāda wanted to see him. "Oh, no," he thought. "Now Prabhupāda will really be angry."

Hari-śauri entered Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, which was filled with guests. "This boy has come," said Prabhupāda, and as Hari-śauri looked around he saw the young Bengali man. The man smiled and said, "Hare Kṛṣṇa." They embraced and began to make apologies.

"So you give him this fruit," said Prabhupāda to Hari-śauri, indicating a basket of fruit sitting on the floor. He then dismissed them and continued preaching to the others in the room. The disagreement was settled, but it had been Prabhupāda himself who had changed the young man's heart and rectified a volatile incident.

One of Prabhupāda's women disciples in Vṛndāvana who got the benefit of his criticisms was Daivī-śakti, who was responsible for cleaning Prabhupāda's quarters. Others helped her, but she was the supervisor. When Śrīla Prabhupāda noticed a glass that had not been polished, he asked who was doing the cleaning, and his servant replied, "Daivī-śakti."

"Oh, she must do everything?" Prabhupāda replied. It was far from being as heavy as some of his criticisms of the temple managers, but Daivī-śakti took it as an indication that she should become much more attentive to the details of her service.

Kiśorī-devī dāstī, the Deities' cook, inquired from Śrīla Prabhupāda about certain aspects of her service. Cook for Kṛṣṇa as for a young man with a big appetite, he advised her. Kṛṣṇa should get ten *purīs*, four *capātīs*, lots of rice, two *samosās*, two *kachaurīs*, two *radas*, and two of each sweet. The cooked preparations should be served hot. "So now you have to teach everyone how to cook," he said. "You have to give everyone what you have received."

Kiśorī would also bring a garland for Śrīla Prabhupāda in the afternoon. To make it cooling, she would sprinkle it with water. For two days

Prabhupāda said nothing, but on the third day he remarked, "Take this away. Why do you put water like that? It is very displeasing."

Viśāla had a practice, which other devotees considered eccentric, of standing at the gate and loudly reciting Sanskrit verses as Śrīla Prabhupāda passed. One morning Prabhupāda approached the gate in a thunderbolt mood, and as usual Viśāla came forward reciting verses.

"Why don't you do something useful?" Prabhupāda said. "Sweep this water away."

Śrīla Prabhupāda would sample the guesthouse cooking daily, often suggesting how to improve the quality. Each day Nava-yogendra would bring Prabhupāda a plate from the restaurant and then note down Prabhupāda's comment on each preparation. The following day the cooks would attempt to improve the food, based on Prabhupāda's remarks.

And so it was with each department. Even when riding in the car, Prabhupāda would ask, "You are having it oiled regularly? You are having it lubricated and serviced?"

Other temples were homes away from home, said Prabhupāda, but Vṇḍāvana was home. Those who wished to live there with him, however, had to pass the test of his constant scrutiny and sharp criticism; they had to accept the hard work and austerity. And special austerities meant special blessings. When a devotee asked to be excused from his duties in Vṇḍāvana to operate a farm in the West, Prabhupāda said that even opening twenty farms would not be as important as remaining in Vṇḍāvana. Those who persevered eventually began to see all difficulties as nectar, as had been expressed by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: "When difficulties arise in service I find them sources of happiness."

On Radhaṣṭamī Śrīla Prabhupāda laid the cornerstone for a large *gurukula* building adjacent to the Krishna-Balaram Mandir. He said that when it was built, the devotees should accommodate five hundred students there from all over the world. Through the gorgeous temple, the guesthouse, and soon the *gurukula*, Śrīla Prabhupāda intended to draw as many people

as possible to the shelter of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. For this end he was willing to sacrifice everything, even his peaceful writing. And for this end he also demanded his disciples to sacrifice.

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Constant travel, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, was becoming more and more inconvenient—one reason for his return to India. But he was by no means stopping; unless he traveled, his movement could not remain vital and healthy. So he was prepared, despite inconvenience, to continue touring. Disciples never stopped inviting him to travel, and recently Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Swami had asked him to come to South Africa. When Prabhupāda agreed, Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa had quickly arranged ten festivals and other engagements in Durban and Johannesburg, covering a period of three weeks in October.

Devotees on the predominantly Hindu island of Mauritius had also requested Prabhupāda to visit, mentioning that the prime minister wanted to meet him. Prabhupāda agreed. Leaving Vṛndāvana—making brief stops in Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Bombay—he was off to Africa.

Mauritius

October 1, 1975

Relieved of management, Prabhupāda was freer now to lecture to interested gatherings. Reception by the press and government ministers in Mauritius was good, but most public questions reflected a lack of sincere interest in spiritual knowledge: “Is it necessary to be a vegetarian?” “Is the soul locked in the third eye?” “You seem dogmatic. Is there any doubt in your philosophy?” Nevertheless, people were respectful and considered Śrīla Prabhupāda an important leader and spiritual authority. He remained there a week.

Durban

October 5

This was Prabhupāda’s first visit to South Africa. For two years the devotees there had been trying to get him a visa, but the government was wary of foreign missionaries. The bureaucratic delays, therefore, had taken months. The devotees had even had to send copies of Prabhupāda’s books for the government officials to review.

Every night for a week Śrīla Prabhupāda delivered public lectures to

crowds of at least a thousand—mostly Hindus, but also many whites. After Prabhupāda's lecture at the University of Durban, Westville, a member of the faculty tried to discredit the lecture by stating, "Well, this is just the Hindu concept." Repeatedly Śrīla Prabhupāda tried explaining how the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness were universal and scientific, but the man kept replying that it was Hindu culture. Dr. S. P. Olivier, rector of the university, sympathized with Prabhupāda's presentation and stayed afterward to speak at length with him. "I think you are quite right," Dr. Olivier began, "but very few people tonight got the point you were trying to make, that this is a scientific reality."

Johannesburg

October 12

Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival at the Johannesburg airport was culturally extraordinary for South Africa—white men bowing down before an Indian! The devotees had borrowed a yellow Mercedes-Benz and had parked it in a spot reserved for state ministers and other dignitaries. No one objected. As Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived, devotees threw flower petals, some young European onlookers bowed down, and the police—impressed by all the protocol—saluted Śrīla Prabhupāda and respectfully opened the door to his Mercedes.

As in Durban, Prabhupāda's lectures were well attended. He was keen to have his books sold during these programs, and he would go to the book booths and ask his disciples, "Are they buying the books?" He was concerned that the Europeans, not just the Hindus, buy the books.

Prabhupāda spoke strongly against racial discrimination, but unlike Mahatma Gandhi, who had been imprisoned in South Africa for his outspoken views, Prabhupāda spoke on the authority of scripture. "What is this black-white business?" he said. "It is nonsense. It is the bodily concept of life." In South Africa such statements would ordinarily have been considered volatile politics, yet everyone appreciated Śrīla Prabhupāda, because he spoke on a purely spiritual level.

One of Prabhupāda's disciples in South Africa, Rddha, asked privately how to deal with the racial issue in Johannesburg. The only solution, Prabhupāda said, was mass *hari-nama saṅkīrtana*. When Rddha asked about starting a farm community, Prabhupāda replied, "Don't be so eager to move out to the country. The preaching is in the cities." He said he was very pleased with what his disciples had done in South Africa within such a short time.

While Prabhupāda was in Johannesburg, Rāmeśvara and company fulfilled their promise and reached him with copies of both volumes of the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda took the books with him to his lecture at one university and quoted from them, speaking on Lord Rṣabhadeva's instructions, beginning with the verse in which Rṣabhadeva advises to his sons not to live for sense gratification.

Mauritius

October 24

Prabhupāda had returned to meet with the prime minister. As a friendly gesture, the prime minister had sent a chauffeured car for Śrīla Prabhupāda's use in Mauritius. One day Prabhupāda was leaving to take a ride in the countryside, but as he was about to enter the car on the right side, Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Swami suggested, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, come to the other side. It's safer." And Prabhupāda complied. For half an hour they rode through the beautiful countryside, past sugarcane fields, mountains, and the ocean. At one point, they stopped and walked along a cliff beside the sea. When they returned to the car, Brahmananda Swami opened the right-side door and Prabhupāda said, "No, the other side is safer," just as Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa had previously suggested.

A few minutes later, as Prabhupāda's black Citroen was rounding a curve, a Volkswagen suddenly appeared, heading toward them in the same lane. Prabhupāda was seated behind Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, and Brahmananda was seated behind the driver. The moment before the Volkswagen had appeared, Śrīla Prabhupāda had sat up, cross-legged, planting his cane against the floor of the car to support himself.

As the Volkswagen rushed toward them, the chauffeur braked, swerving to the left, but the Volkswagen swerved in the same direction. There was a head-on collision. Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa's head hit the windshield, cracking the glass. The driver's head also slammed against the glass, and his face was covered with blood.

In the back seat, Śrīla Prabhupāda remained sitting, his face set gravely. Brahmananda, in shock, suddenly embraced Prabhupāda, as if to protect him, although the danger had already passed.

Brahmananda then jumped out of the car to try and flag down a motorist, and Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa got out and opened the back door, where he found Śrīla Prabhupāda with his face bruised, his leg bleeding, and pieces of glass scattered at his feet. Prabhupāda didn't speak or indicate how he felt.

Suddenly Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa realized that the car, disabled on a curve, was in a dangerous position, so he joined Brahmānanda in the road to caution motorists and to try to get someone to stop.

The Citroen and the Volkswagen were totaled, and the man and woman in the Volkswagen were both injured. Motorists soon stopped, and when the injured persons had received help, Prabhupāda and the devotees got into a car and rode back to the temple.

Harikeśa was waiting anxiously, wondering why Śrīla Prabhupāda was so late, when suddenly Prabhupāda entered, walking very stiffly, saying nothing. When Harikeśa saw all three were injured, he cried out, "My God! What happened? What happened?" But Śrīla Prabhupāda just walked to his quarters and sat down, silent. A devotee brought bandages for the obvious injuries: Prabhupāda's chin, hand, and leg, and Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa's and Brahmānanda's heads.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had said nothing since the accident. Finally he spoke: "*Asann api kleśa-da āsa dehaḥ.*" And he translated: "As soon as you accept this material body, there are so many difficulties. We were sitting peacefully in the car, and the next moment—crash." He talked briefly about the collision, and Brahmānanda Swami told how just before the accident Prabhupāda had braced himself with his cane, preventing perhaps more serious injuries.

"Get some resin and turmeric," Prabhupāda said. "Mix it together with a bit of lye, and heat it." Prabhupāda was again speaking—*Bhāgavata* philosophy and practical medical remedies. It remained a frightening event, however, and Prabhupāda asked the devotees to have *kīrtana*. Kṛṣṇa had saved them, he said. Considering that both cars had been destroyed, the injuries were negligible.

Prabhupāda sat like a battle hero, annointed in three places with the yellow poultice, while Harikeśa read aloud from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—"The Disappearance of Haridāsa Ṭhākura."

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda began talking about the dangers of traveling, questioning the advisability of his extensive touring. His mission of translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vaiṣṇava literature was too important for him to be risking his life traveling in automobiles. He had been considering a visit to Nairobi before returning to Bombay, but now he said he would cancel his visit. He said he had never wanted to leave Bombay, but because they had made so many arrangements in Africa, he had come. Perhaps the accident was a sign that he should go back to India.

The next morning, with Brahmananda Swami and Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Swami hobbling along, Prabhupāda went on his morning walk as usual, although he favored his injured knee. Again he discussed with his disciples whether he should go on to Nairobi or return to India. Cyavana, the president of ISKCON Nairobi, argued that Prabhupāda should go to Nairobi. The devotees there were expecting it, he said, and they had made arrangements. If Prabhupāda canceled now, he would probably not come back for a long time. Others, however, argued that there was no question of asking Śrīla Prabhupāda to keep going now, after this traumatic accident; he should go directly to Bombay.

Prabhupāda heard both opinions, but he was more affected by the consideration of disappointing the devotees in Nairobi than of recuperating after the accident. He decided to go to Nairobi.

But after only a few days in Nairobi, Prabhupāda became anxious to return to India. Reports were reaching him about mismanagement in Bombay and about building materials being stolen from the property through a conspiracy involving the workers, the storekeeper, and the *chaukidars*. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard this, he became so morose he stopped translating. He even stopped eating. Although thousands of miles from Bombay, he was feeling the pain more than any of the devotees there. Many of them, in fact, were not even aware that the theft was taking place. When Brahmananda Swami asked Prabhupāda why he wasn't eating, he replied, "How can I eat when my money is being stolen?"

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Bombay

November 1

Śrīla Prabhupāda's plane from Nairobi arrived in Bombay at one A.M., yet even at such an early hour he was greeted at the temple by a gathering of intimate life members, disciples, and even some of the tenants on the land. When the group followed him to his room, he confided that he had had a serious accident, and he even showed them the scar on his knee. He said he was relieved to be back. In a letter from Bombay he wrote,

The accident was very disastrous, but still Krishna saved. . . . Perhaps I may stay here for some time for finishing our temple construction on this land.

ISKCON Bombay was Śrīla Prabhupāda's office, and he immediately

got to work. He fired the engineer, whom he held responsible for the poor, slow work and stolen building materials. At first Prabhupāda had tried to avoid hiring a construction company by having Surabhī oversee the whole project, assigning work to various subcontractors. But that wasn't working.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted a change, but there was no clear alternative. "We have come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness for a life of eternal bliss," he said to Surabhī. "But instead of eternal bliss, I am suffering eternal anxiety." He appealed to Surabhī, Gīrājā, and the others to do something.

One day a life member, a construction engineer, visited the site and told Śrīla Prabhupāda the temple and hotel could easily be completed in six months. Prabhupāda then berated Surabhī, who said that six months' time was not enough. "Now I am nowhere," thought Surabhī. "I'm losing my service."

Then another life member, Mr. Omkar Prakash Dir, the chief engineer with E C C, one of India's largest, most reputable construction companies, came to the Sunday feast and examined the work. Appalled at the poor quality, he said that after two or three years it would fall apart.

Gīrājā, impressed with the idea of hiring Bombay's biggest, most competent construction firm, spoke with Prabhupāda, who was also interested. At first Surabhī resented that the work was being taken out of his hands, but after meeting with Mr. Dir, he also liked the proposed change.

The contract was made with E C C, and Mr. Dir presented a progress chart, detailing each phase of the work and showing when it would be completed. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased with their professional methods, despite the higher cost. Now the work would be done as professionally and as quickly as possible, and this was what mattered most.

Prabhupāda stayed for the greater part of November, and the construction progressed quickly. There was no question of cutting corners to save a little money, Prabhupāda explained to Surabhī. The temple had to be a beautiful jewel, so that people from all over India would want to come and stay. During the Vṛndāvana construction Prabhupāda had emphasized, "Why so much? Why not just simple?" But now he was stressing, "Why not more?" The temple should be opulent and ornate, with marble everywhere. The hotel should be the finest, with beautifully furnished rooms and an elegant restaurant. And the air-conditioned theater building should be one of the best in Bombay.

"Why not marble on the floors?" asked Prabhupāda, speaking of the hotel rooms.

"It's going to be very expensive," said Surabhī.

"Don't worry about the money," Prabhupāda said "Can we put marble on the floor? Then do it" Surabhī did it, but tried to save money by putting a cheaper stone in the hotel hallways When Prabhupāda saw it, he was displeased It should have been all marble, he said

Funds for the Bombay construction came primarily from the sale of books in America, and Śrīla Prabhupāda was regularly receiving reports On November 18 Rāmesvara sent a telegram with some of the good news

ONE MILLION COPIES OF BTG JUST PRINTED DEVOTEES
GONE WILD PROMISED TO DISTRIBUTE ALL WITHIN ONE
MONTH SPANISH GITA JUST OFF THE PRESS BRINGING HUN
DREDS OF MILLIONS TO YOUR LOTUS FEET ALL POSSIBLE
BY YOUR MERCY ONLY

When the temple president from ISKCON Denver wrote asking about starting a jewelry business, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote back, disapproving

Why are they doing business? This creates a bad atmosphere. We shall only do one business and that is book selling That's all As soon as you become karmīs after business then spiritual life becomes damaged. This business should not be encouraged anymore. Doing business and not sankīrtana, that is not at all good Sankīrtana is very good but gr̥hasthas under condition can do other business only if they give at least 50 percent But sankīrtana is the best business

Prabhupāda envisioned that book distribution could not only finance Bombay construction but could also support his even more ambitious plans for Māyāpur Book distribution was ground business, and it was the best preaching. It was Prabhupāda's formula—American money combined with India's spiritual culture—and he encouraged Rāmeśvara to motivate the sankīrtana in the U.S.A. in accordance with this principle.

America has the money so this is cooperation between the blind men and lame men. It will make good relations between India and America. The next chance I have for meeting with Indira Gandhi I shall inform her about how much foreign exchange we are sending After receiving your encouraging assurance that as book distribution increases the amount BBT sends will also increase, we are now going to attempt

a Kurukshetra project and the Jagannath Puri project. For the time being we are spending in India, but eventually we will spend everywhere. This will greatly enhance the Americans' spiritual position.

Always remain dependent on Guru and Krishna and your progress will always be assured.

CHAPTER FIVE

India: Unifying ISKCON

During 1975 Śrīla Prabhupāda increasingly referred management problems to the GBC, specifically to the annual GBC meeting in Mayapur. From the beginning of ISKCON he had been saying, "It is not one man's work." He had created the Governing Body Commission to relieve himself of the staggering burden of personally managing his growing world organization. "Always remember," he had written to a GBC member, "that you are one of the few leaders I have given this responsibility to and your task is very great."

Prabhupāda saw the progress of his movement as a wonderfully successful phenomenon, proof of the direct mercy of Lord Caitanya upon his humble efforts. ISKCON was his service to his Guru Mahārāja, and now his disciples should maintain it and increase it as their service to their spiritual master. He said he wanted to see 108 flourishing temples before his departure from the world. Keeping those temples alive was to be the work of his sincere followers. He wrote to his GBC representative for Australia,

All temples in Melbourne, London, Paris, Bombay, all are very nice. Everything is very bright and brilliant. The Deity is proof of the sincere service. It is the duty of the GBC now to maintain this. Their duty is to enthuse them and maintain.

Problems were inevitable for a preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Many *sādhus* therefore, preferred to remain in a holy place, without preaching.

But Bbaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and the great *ācāryas* in the *sampradāya* of Lord Caitanya had been concerned with offering the Lord's devotional service to as many conditioned souls as possible.

Yet to take up this path one would have to be tolerant. Financial needs, national and local governmental restrictions, ignorant and demonic enemies of pure devotion to the Lord, envy, personal ambition and disagreements among neophyte devotees, struggles and falldowns in the attempt to avoid illicit sex and intoxication—all these and many more problems complicated the preacher's mission. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, knew the struggle was worth it, even to save just one soul from the cycle of birth and death.

Prabhupāda wanted his more advanced disciples to share the struggle with him. And when he saw competence and sincerity in some of his senior members, he tried to turn affairs over to them and concentrate more on his life's mission of presenting all twelve cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Always the devotees were enthusiastically pressing Prabhupāda to translate and write more books—so that they could read them and distribute them. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied that he was trying his best, but that the task was not mechanical; great concentration and peace of mind were required. He could not write while at the same time being besieged by dozens of threatening, complicated issues.

When the G.B.C. member responsible for Gurukula wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda with a plan that all ISKCON centers should support the educational system, Prabhupāda replied, "As far as taxing the centers for the maintenance, that should be considered amongst the GBC."

When a controversy arose in the Stockholm center and devotees appealed to Prabhupāda for a judgment, he replied, "This must be considered at a full meeting of the G.B.C." And he added, "All of our students will have to become *guru*, but they are not qualified."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that sexual attraction, making unnecessary changes, and fighting among Godbrothers were all Western "diseases." Kṛṣṇa consciousness was the path of perfection, and if his disciples stayed persistently and sincerely on the path, they could certainly succeed.

Sometimes, however, Prabhupāda saw the Western diseases overcoming his disciples, and even the G.B.C. members would seem unable to stop it. Yet unless they spared him from such headaches, how could he do the higher work? "G.B.C.," he said, "must mean that by his managing, there are not any complaints, so that I can be relieved to do the translation work."

He had expounded on this principle in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*

When the disciples are grown up and are able to preach, the spiritual master should retire and sit down in a solitary place to write and execute *nirjona bhajana*. This means sitting silently in a solitary place and executing devotional service

The devotees of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness now render service as preachers in various parts of the world. Now they can allow their spiritual master to retire from active preaching work. In the last stage of the spiritual master's life, the devotees of the spiritual master should take preaching activities into their own hands

But it was like trying to control the wind. When the difficulties mounted, the devotees would run to him like children running to their father. Sometimes a disciple would simultaneously ask him to write his books and then drop a serious problem in his lap. One of the leaders in America reported to him that some devotees were not following the principles, but that Śrīla Prabhupāda should please stay in India and continue writing peacefully. Prabhupāda wrote back,

If the old habits come back, then everything is finished. If my mind becomes disturbed in this way, then how can I concentrate on book writing? It is not possible. Better not inform me anything, and let me sit in Vrindaban.

Sometimes Śrīla Prabhupāda uttered the phrase "let me sit in Vrindavana," as if to give up managing the whole problematic Society. Everyone knew he would never leave ISKCON, he had already sacrificed his life to save the world by leading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. But when would his disciples mature? Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, "I want that the GBC relieve me of all management, which means they have to manage the way I manage." And often he would say, "Do as I am doing."

When controversies and disagreements among the GBC secretaries themselves came before him, he would refer them to the GBC body

I appointed GBC for peaceful management of affairs, and now you are creating disturbances among yourselves. So how can I be peaceful

to translate my work? So all these things should be kept in abeyance for the time being, and when we meet in Mayapur we can discuss amongst the entire GBC The Spiritual Sky questions and all other questions of this nature will simply have to wait until we discuss it in Mayapur

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to hold the GBC responsible for settling the affairs of ISKCON. For better or worse, he wanted all his disciples to accept the GBC as their authority, and he trusted that when the GBC members all met together, working under his guidance, they could solve the problems. But whether they could actually spare him, allowing him to peacefully write his books, seemed doubtful.

During 1975, a controversy arose among some of the ISKCON members, including some of the GBC members, as to whether *grhastha* devotees, married men, could actually be spiritual leaders in ISKCON. Although the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy clearly explained that any devotee, regardless of his *asrama*, could become qualified and purified, the controversy grew.

In September a *sannyast* GBC member flew from the U.S. to Vṛndāvana just to suggest to Prabhupāda that another GBC member, a *grhastha*, was not qualified to lead. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, said the matter could be settled at the annual GBC meeting. But when the next day a letter came from Ramesvara, supplicating Prabhupāda to continue his translating work, Prabhupāda replied that he was prepared to work at his writing but that when one leader flies ten thousand miles to lodge a complaint against another, then, "What can I do?"

If you all leaders cannot work together, then how can you expect the others to cooperate with you? Differences may be there, but still you have to cooperate together, otherwise where is the question of my being relieved of so many problems and decisions?

As the third annual international festival approached, the longstanding problems of various discontented parties awaited settlement in the court of the GBC. Śrīla Prabhupāda would be arriving in Mayapur on January 17, almost two months before the GBC meetings and the gathering of devotees. With perhaps a thousand devotees attending, there would be blissful *kīrtanas* classes, and *parikramas*. And there would be problems. Prabhupāda made it clear that the proper way of settling the controversies was not by gossiping about them, not by pressing him for a ruling, but

by trusting in the G.B.C. Prabhupāda himself would stand by the decisions of the G.B.C. or, if necessary, correct them, and so sincere followers should also not hesitate to follow.

At the Mayapur meeting, whatever we have decided, that is good for one year. So if anything has to be done it will be decided by majority decision of the GBC. I do not wish to give any decision without the GBC's verdict. My only grievance is that I appointed GBC to give me relief from the management, but, on the contrary, complaints and counter-complaints are coming to me. Then how my brain can be peaceful? So best thing is that we wait for the Mayapur meeting and decide there combinedly what to do. If there are any discrepancies that will be discussed at the GBC meeting in Mayapur. How can one man manage the whole world affairs?

January 17, 1976

Enroute from Calcutta to Māyāpur, Prabhupāda stopped at the mango grove and took breakfast—fruit, *voḍa*, nuts, and sweets. Even before reaching Māyāpur, he was enjoying the peaceful atmosphere of the Bengal countryside. Soon he would be at the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, his special place of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

More than fifty adult devotees and thirty young Bengali *gurukula* boys were waiting for Śrīla Prabhupāda at the gate. For the first time, Prabhupāda beheld the large entrance dome, recently built over the gate. A thick, twenty-foot flower garland stretched across the gateway, and before it stood Bhavānanda Goswami, holding a small silk cushion on which rested a pair of scissors. Stepping out of the car into the bright sunlight, Prabhupāda took the scissors and cut the garland, sanctifying the gate. Prabhupāda smiled. Everyone cheered as the gate swung open and Prabhupāda entered, followed by the ecstatic *kīrtana* party.

As Prabhupāda walked toward the temple of Rādhā-Mādhava, everywhere he looked he saw blossoming flowers. Clay pots of burning frankincense billowed fragrant smoke, and women stood on the second-floor veranda offering showers of rose petals as Prabhupāda approached. The main building was decorated beautifully. Walking beneath an orange silk umbrella amid the devotees and exuberant *kīrtana* of the holy name, he appeared regal and triumphant.

Inside the temple, where dozens of garlands hung from the ceiling, Prabhupāda came before the golden forms of Rādhā-Mādhava and offered

prostrated obeisances. He felt he was in Vaikunṭha. Because of the arrangements the devotees had made, he said, Kṛṣṇa was smiling.

Later that day, as Prabhupāda was taking his massage, his servant Hari-śauri suggested that this would be a good place for retirement. "Either Vṛndāvana or Māyāpur," Prabhupāda replied. "No other place. That is sure."

In the afternoon Prabhupāda inspected the grounds and buildings. He was pleased at the spaciousness of the *prasādam* hall, built to seat twelve hundred, and he remarked that its size reminded him of the Bombay railway station. But when he found the steps to the kitchen dirty, he criticized strongly. One of the devotees explained that it was usually cleaned but that the devotee who always did it was chanting his *japa*. "You are chanting *japa*," said Prabhupāda, "and it has not been cleaned for three hundred years. Clean first, then *japa*. Under the plea of *japa* they are simply dozing." He said that anyone who finds a situation affected by the mode of ignorance but doesn't act to correct it is also being affected by the mode of ignorance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda walked down to the bank of the Jalāngī to see the boat the devotees were using for traveling from village to village. Onboard, he praised the simple life of traveling and preaching. He also went to the *gośālā* and saw the calves and cows, and he drank a cup of the first sugar-cane juice of the season, from cane grown on the ISKCON land.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda walked through the fields to the proposed site of the Māyāpur city, Surabhi described where various buildings could be located. Prabhupāda suggested they present their plan to West Bengal government officials and ask them to provide the necessary land.

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to meditate on the Māyāpur city, and a few days later he composed a letter to the chief secretary of West Bengal, asking for help in acquiring land. ISKCON should not be misunderstood as a sectarian religious institution, he informed the chief secretary. Kṛṣṇa's instructions in *Bhagavad-gītā*, beginning with "We are not the body," were scientific and thus did not belong to any particular religion. Prabhupāda also asserted that ISKCON programs, especially the one contemplated for Māyāpur, would solve national and international problems through spiritual education. He mentioned features that would be particularly appealing to the chief secretary, such as the investment of foreign capital in the project, the flow of tourists who would come to Māyāpur,

and the hiring of thousands of local workers for constructing and maintaining the city. His description of the project was fascinating.

Centered around a cultural exposition building, the total village communal development will unfold. This central exposition building is the first phase of a many-phased plan. It will feature the world's largest planetarium, entitled "The Temple of Understanding." This structure will be over thirty stories high and will house exhibits depicting all the levels of universal existence and all varieties of living conditions, and all the planetary systems and exact detail through lights, models, dioramas and murals. There will also be daily scheduled exhibits and tours for the public, and even a moving escalator taking the public to the upper levels of the exhibition building. The planetarium's exhibits on the various levels of existence in this world and beyond will be based on the scientific findings in the Vedic literatures, especially the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. This "Temple of Understanding" shall be surrounded by beautiful pathways, entrances, gardens and water reservoirs. Four-story buildings, one thousand feet long, will stand at the perimeter of the central area on all four sides. These will be used for teaching general and specialized branches of education from primary level to post graduate level.

In his letter Śrīla Prabhupāda referred to difficulties in purchasing land for ISKCON's projects, since all the local landowners were escalating their prices far beyond the market value. If the government could make the land available at market prices, then ISKCON could immediately start its important work, officially inaugurating it on the birthday anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, March 16, 1976.

In the meantime, Prabhupāda was trying on his own to acquire enough land to begin The Māyāpur City project. It would require extensive funding and many years of work to develop, but it would proclaim the glories of Lord Caitanya with unlimited potency. Māyāpur would become famous, drawing people from all over the world to see the unique, modern application of timeless Vedic wisdom.

Prabhupāda explained to his disciples that although a *sannyāsī* traditionally does not involve himself with money, the devotee's desire is to unite Lakṣmī (the goddess of fortune, represented by wealth) with Nārāyaṇa (God). He said there was truth to the common saying "No one listens to a poor man," and were he to advertise A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī discoursing in an empty field in Māyāpur, no one would come. Westerners

especially should be able to hear about Kṛṣṇa in a comfortable, attractive setting. Prabhupāda planned, therefore, that visitors to ISKCON's transcendental city be well accommodated. Gradually, the world would be deeply affected by the dynamic demonstration of the artistic, philosophical, and humanitarian aspects of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Prabhupāda asked Surabhi to draw a master plan for Māyāpur City. Staying up all night, Surabhi made a preliminary architectural sketch, showing specific areas of the city for *brāhmanas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*. The sketch also showed temples, schools, streets, walkways, residential buildings, cottages, a stadium and an airport, as well as self-sufficiency features like windmills, irrigation systems, and agricultural fields.

Prabhupāda was taking his massage when Surabhi brought him the drawing. Prabhupāda's golden body was glistening with mustard oil as Hari-śauri carefully, strongly massaged his head, back, chest, and limbs. Prabhupāda was relaxed and silent, his eyes closed in meditation. But when Surabhi entered with the drawing of Māyāpur, he became animated. Prabhupāda liked the drawing and talked about it for an hour. Now Surabhi should make a formal drawing and approach professional architects and appropriate government agencies. The devotees coming to Māyāpur should also see it. As fabulous and far-reaching as it was, the Māyāpur City should now become a reality.

As the festival drew near, some of the *sannyāsīs* arrived, hoping to associate more intimately with Śrīla Prabhupāda before the flood of devotees began. A major topic of discussion among the *sannyāsīs* was the controversy over the role of *grhastha* men in ISKCON and the influence of women and children on the *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*, those in the renounced orders. Some of the *sannyāsīs* were suggesting that ISKCON should be more structured, to separate the renounced orders and the preachers from the householders. They began airing their views before Śrīla Prabhupāda, who then guided them. On one morning walk, Jayapataka Swami inquired about the standards required before a man could take *sannyāsa*.

"To become *sannyāsī*," Prabhupāda replied, "the other three processes are there—to become *brahmacārī*, to become *grhastha*, and to become *śrāmadāśī*. Stage by stage. But if one is able, he can take *sannyāsa*. And that competency is also very simple. If you become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, then you can immediately become competent—*brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*. As soon as you fully engage yourself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then im-

mediately you become more than a *sannyasi*”

Harī saurī, a *grhastha*, inquired whether artificially accepting the renounced order could actually be indulging in another form of sense gratification

“As soon as we manufacture something,” Prabhupāda replied, “that is sense gratification. When we think, ‘I want to fulfill my desire, that’s all,’ that is sense gratification. It may be that I sit down under a tree or I sit down in a palace—the basic principle is sense gratification. The other day I was talking about *hira cora* and *kira cora*. *Hira* means ‘diamond,’ and *kira* means ‘cucumber.’ One is thinking, ‘I shall steal one cucumber’ and another thinks, ‘If I steal, I shall steal the diamond.’ But the stealing propensity is there. One may think that ‘I am only stealing a cucumber, and it is not very dangerous,’ but in the eyes of the law both of them are criminal. So if we manufacture a concoction—‘Yes, I have got a stealing propensity, but I’ll not steal a diamond, I’ll steal *kira*’—that is only mental concoction. But he is a thief”

Jayapatāka Swamī “So is *grhastha* life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness allowing us to steal *kira*?”

Prabhupāda “Yes, *kira cora*. The prostitute hunter is *hira cora*, and the householder is *kira cora*. That’s all”

Again Harī śaurī inquired whether artificial renunciation was sense gratification. There were different views among the disciples, and they wanted Prabhupāda to make it very clear, so that one party could not take a quote from Prabhupāda and claim it was universal.

“Renunciation is not artificial,” said Prabhupāda. “It is a process. We have to give up this sense gratification. So go through a process to turn. Like sometimes in a health club there is artificial swimming, is it not? Artificial swimming is not actual swimming, but it is to practice.”

Dayānanda “But sometimes people who renounce, they become very proud. What is that?”

Prabhupāda continued to reply that renunciation had to be actually practiced. “Everyone must attend the *maṅgala-ārati*,” he said. “One must attend this. Otherwise, no *prasādam*. If you are too sick, then also you should not eat. There should not be sleeping at the time of *maṅgala-ārati* because he says he’s sick, then at the time of *prasādam*, voracious eating”

If the devotees were looking for Prabhupāda to make an absolute distinction between *grhastha* and *sannyāsi*, it was not there. He emphasized, rather, the actual quality and the practice of the individual devotee.

On another morning walk Hṛdayānanda Goswamī told Prabhupāda of the *sannyāsi*’s discussions.

Hṛdayānanda: "We were thinking that it would be nice to have the city centers for the preachers. And for the women and children, it's much easier to maintain them on our farms. There they can do a little work and produce their own food."

Prabhupāda: "Yes. In the farms they can live and do some handwork."

Gurukṛpā Swami: "They won't do it, though, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

Prabhupāda: "Then you don't allow. If they do not follow the rules and regulations, then what is the use?"

Another *sannyāsi* said that when many householders came together in big communities, an atmosphere of laziness developed, whereas when lots of *brahmacārīs* were preaching together, it was more enlivening.

Prabhupāda: "Anyway, everyone should be engaged. That's all. No idle life. Never encourage laziness. If we maintain some lazy men, then everything will be spoiled."

Devotee: "I heard, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you remarked our Society is not a love-making Society, but these things are going on."

Referring to an impropriety of two of his disciples, Prabhupāda replied, "Yes, I have seen in Vṛndāvana."

Other complaints arose. One leader argued that the temple should not have to carry the burden of maintaining women with children but no husbands. Another complaint was that *brahmacārīs*, by selling books, were in effect supporting the householders.

Prabhupāda continued to reply in a philosophical and practical way that whatever discrepancies were present should be rectified. Sense gratification, laziness, and failure to attend the temple programs should not be tolerated. But this condemnation of malpractices in devotional service did not fall exclusively on any particular group.

Shortly after his arrival in Mayāpur, Prabhupāda had addressed a similar issue in his own correspondence. A Mr. Chatterji had written from Calcutta to say that he was preaching worship of Lord Caitanya and was eager to show Śrīla Prabhupāda some articles he had written. Mr. Chatterji stated, "My theme is we can get to see our God, Gaurāṅga, by taking *sannyāsa*. Those who are *gṛhaṣṭhas* reach to the Godhead through *nam sankīrtana*." Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged the man with a reply.

Your theme is okay. There were many devotees of Lord Chaitanya like Advaita Acharya, and even Lord Nityānanda who were *gṛhaṣṭhas*. Lord Chaitanya left His *gṛhaṣṭha* life. It is a matter of understanding Kṛṣṇa—that is the real qualification. Whether one is *gṛhaṣṭha* or *sannyāsi*, how well he knows Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Nārottama dāsa Thākura has

sung "grhe va vane ta 'thake, he gauranga bo'le dake."* Lord Chaitanya says "Kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya, yei krishna tattva vetta, sei guru haya"† So please come and we shall discuss your articles

While sitting relaxed in his room, Śrīla Prabhupāda had his temporary secretary, Dayananda, read him some recent mail. One letter was from a temple president having difficulty managing the devotees, and Prabhupāda had Dayananda summarize the letter's points.

"He says," said Dayananda, "that the devotees aren't behaving, and so he's criticizing. But they're not accepting."

"Simply criticism is not our means," said Prabhupāda. "Our means is to show by example." Dayananda made a note of it to use in typing Prabhupāda's reply.

"Now, Śrīla Prabhupāda," Dayananda continued, "he's inquiring about his household life."

"This is not the business of the *guru*," said Prabhupāda. "—how to increase sex life and family life. They are not happy, these Western men and women. They become married, but they are not happy. Therefore I recommend *brahmacharya* and *sannyasa* life."

Several other devotees were also in the room with Prabhupāda, and Jagad guru, a *brahmocārī*, spoke up. "Because they have no training, that's why they have so many problems."

"Whatever it may be," said Prabhupāda. "But they are not happy. Therefore I recommend *brahmacharya* and *sannyasa*."

Śrīla Prabhupāda had already been disturbed by what he saw as a loose husband-wife situation in Vṛndāvana. Now, hearing this letter from a householder who was improperly inquiring about his family life, he again turned his attention to Vṛndāvana and asked to see his GBC for Vṛndāvana, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, who had recently arrived in Māyāpur.

"It is not a free hotel for love making," Prabhupāda began, even before Gopāla Kṛṣṇa entered the room. "Vṛndāvana is not a joking place. They must be serious for Kṛṣṇa, and I shall give them everything. Don't worry

* * It doesn't matter whether one is living at home or in the forest, as long as he is chanting the name of Lord Caitanya he is a *vaishnava*."

† "Whether one is a *brahmana*, a *sannyāsī* or a *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa" (Cc. *Madhya* 8.128).

about money, but manage. There is not scarcity of money. There is scarcity of management. Why so many children in the temple? It is not simply a place for husbandless women. Children should always be engaged, so they shouldn't create a disturbance all over."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that if the mothers were irresponsible and only wanted to take care of their own children, then they should be sent away from Vṛndāvana. Two women could run a nursery and take care of many children, and the other women could work. "Not go to the roof and love making," said Prabhupāda, "and make a plan and go away." He stressed that since all India came to Vṛndāvana, ISKCON's center should be ideal in every respect. Otherwise, people would think that his disciples were hippies, and no one would come. A good example of responsible care for children was in Māyāpur, where a *gurukula* had already been organized. "Children are welcome," said Prabhupāda, "but make them jewels. Not spoiled children, *varṇa sankarā* hippies."

For the *sannyāsts* in Māyāpur, Prabhupāda's heavy words about irresponsible *gṛhastha* life fueled their own arguments. A few of them felt that *gṛhasthas* should not even live in the temples. That evening, when the *sannyāsts* gathered in Prabhupāda's room, they discussed with him the position of families and children in ISKCON.

One *sannyāst* reported not being allowed to preach in certain temples, because he was against marriage and favored *brahmacārī* life. Others complained that expensive properties were being purchased to be used mostly as residences. The preaching was suffering, they said, and *brahmacārīs* were being told to get married if they felt sexually agitated.

Prabhupāda felt the heavy force of the *sannyāsts'* protest, and he could perceive the antagonism between the *asramas*. These things must be decided by the GBC, he said, and no one could go against their decisions. But he also expressed sympathy for what the *sannyāsts* were saying. Families, he suggested, could serve in farm communities and live self-sufficiently in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"Our whole preaching program is detachment from material life," said Prabhupāda, "to stop sex life altogether. *Gṛhastha* is a concession for those who cannot give it up immediately. Otherwise marriage is not required. It is simply burdensome. Legal or illegal, the after effects of sex simply mean difficulty."

March 7

The GBC members assembled. The process was to make an agenda,

discuss each issue, and then pass resolutions by voting. At the end of the day they would go to Śrīla Prabhupāda in his room and read the day's resolutions for his approval or amendment. The first day they spent mostly in assigning zones and duties for each GBC member. They reported these results to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and he approved them.

Prabhupāda also addressed the issue of *grhastha* and *sannyasa* life, saying that all the devotees should become attached to Kṛṣṇa's family, not to the "stool" family or "pig" family. *Sannyāsa* life meant rejection of the false family, but not the family of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness society was based on renunciation, said Prabhupāda, and therefore all sincere devotees were as good as *sannyāsīs*. The actual dress didn't matter, whether white or saffron,* although an ideal *grhastha* should eventually come to the stage of formal *sannyaso*. He said that all his disciples should become *gurus* and each make thousands of disciples, just as he had, thus spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere.

"Discuss in the GBC," he said, "and make a decision. Question and put to vote. But if you make *brahmacārī* party, *grhastha* party, *sannyāsī* party, it will be finished. Everything should be done very openly. We have to work for Kṛṣṇa. Why this pss pss whispering? It is not very good."

The next morning while Śrīla Prabhupāda was on his walk around the Mayāpur fields, the GBC vice chairman, Madhudviṣa Swamī, asked for guidance in preparation for the GBC meeting that day.

Madhudviṣa: "The subjects that we are going to be discussing today in the GBC meeting are about the role of *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* and *grhasthas* in ISKCON. In the Eighteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad gītā*, in one of your purports, you say that a *sannyāsī* should never discourage a young man from getting married. But on the other hand, we understand that a *sannyāsī* should encourage young men to remain *brahmacārī*. So it seems to me like there's some kind of contradiction."

Prabhupāda: "According to time and circumstance. Just like Kṛṣṇa says, *nyatam kuru korma tvam*. 'Always be engaged in your prescribed work.' And at last He says, *sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam śaranam vraja*.† So now you adjust. That is not a contradiction. It is just suitable to the time and circumstance."

Madhudviṣa: "But is there some conclusion?"

Prabhupāda: "The real aim is that you have to become the eternal

* *Grhastha* men traditionally wear white. *Brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* wear saffron.

† "Give up all prescribed duty [dharma] and surrender unto Me." (*Bhagavad gītā* 18.66)

servant of Kṛṣṇa. Either you go through *karma* or *jñāna* or *yoga*, it doesn't matter. The ultimate aim is how to reach Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna achieved the favor of Kṛṣṇa by fighting and killing. Hare Kṛṣṇa."

Prabhupāda said no more. He had created the G.B.C. to deal with just such problems, and he had instructed his G.B.C. men personally, in letters and in his books. Now they would have to apply those instructions according to time and place.

The G.B.C. met, discussed all day, and by evening had a list of resolutions pertaining to the divisions of *āśrama* in ISKCON: Husbandless women with children could not live in ISKCON temples. Husband and wife could not live in ISKCON temples, even if separately. Before entering marriage, devotees should have a means of supporting themselves and not expect to "live off" ISKCON. Upon getting married, a householder would be financially responsible for his wife until such time as he took *sannyāsa*.

Reading the resolutions to Prabhupāda in his room usually evoked little verbal response from him. His practice was generally to nod in approval, or occasionally to comment. But when he heard the resolution that husbandless women with children could not stay in the temples, he uttered a thoughtful "Hmmm." Then he said, "As for me, my only concern is that they shall not waste their valuable human life." He was speaking not in the tone of the official head of the society, who could veto resolutions, but in a very personal, humble way, as a pure devotee. "After so much struggle," he said, "they have got this human form, and I do not want that they should miss the opportunity. As for me, I cannot discriminate—man, woman, child, rich, poor, educated, or foolish. Let them all come, and let them take Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so that they will not waste their human life."

Although the G.B.C. members usually had plenty to say, after these remarks from Prabhupāda they remained silent.

Finally, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, the elected G.B.C. chairman for the year, spoke. "Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said. "So we will strike that resolution."

Prabhupāda also disapproved the resolution that a householder would have to give financial support for his wife for the rest of his life until he took *sannyāsa*.

"You each be *guru*," he said. "As I have five thousand disciples or ten thousand, so you have ten thousand each. In this way, create branches and branches of the Caitanya tree. But you have to be spiritually strong. This means chanting your rounds and following the four rules. It is not

an artificial show It is not a material thing Chant and follow the four rules and pray to Kṛṣṇa in helplessness We have to have enthusiasm If we lose our enthusiasm, everything will become slack In old age I came out from Vṛndāvana I had no money, nothing But I thought, 'Let me try' "

Bhagavan spoke out spontaneously "You're still enthusiastic, Śrīla Prabhupāda"

"Yes" Prabhupada smiled "I am enthusiastic I don't think I am an old man"

"Sometimes we think *we* are old," said Bhagavan

"No one is old," said Prabhupada "*Na hanyate hanyamane sarīre* * Sometimes in old age one is pushed down But I am enthusiastic"

Prabhupāda said he was pleased at most of the resolutions, because they indicated that a strong G B C was now ready to relieve him so he could concentrate on his translation work He said that the devotees would have to strictly follow for the entire year what the G B C had agreed on There should be no changes unless he approved, and at the next annual meeting they could make any changes necessary

The G B C chairman then called for a vote on an unresolved topic from the day's meeting The topic had been discussed, but since it had not been approved, the chairman called for a vote Everyone voted yes by raising their right hand Then Śrīla Prabhupada raised his hand also His disciples immediately laughed at this endearing gesture

"Yes," Prabhupada said, "I am simply following the G B C Whatever you say, I have to follow"

When the temple presidents heard about the G B C resolutions, many objected They knew Prabhupāda had approved them, but they thought that the actual spirit and interpretation some of the *sannyasis* might give to the resolutions would cause a split in the Society Many of the temple presidents, being *gṛhasthas*, felt discriminated against They wanted a chance to present their side.

Prabhupāda knew of the presidents' discontent, and he brought up the subject on his next morning walk Surrounded by *sannyasis*, G B C men, temple presidents, and others, he brought out the issues, attempting to bring his spiritual family into harmony

* "The soul is not destroyed with the destruction of the body" (*Bhagavad gītā* 2.20)

"I have heard," he said, "that too much stricture on the *grhasthas* may cause some disturbance. Hmmm?"

"Yes," admitted Madhudviṣa.

"So," said Prabhupāda, "I think the *grhasthas* themselves should form a small committee and define what they will do, instead of forcing something on them. Because in this age, nobody can follow strictly all the strictures in the *śāstras*."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa objected to the idea of *grhasthas* revising the G.B.C. resolutions. "In none of our resolutions," he argued, "do we say anything about how the *grhasthas* should live. The resolutions simply say how our Society should be run. It doesn't say how *grhasthas* should live. And on points of objection, Prabhupāda has already corrected us."

"I think it may be further decided," Prabhupāda continued. "Make a small committee of three or four *grhasthas*. Then you define how you live."

Changing the subject, Prabhupāda asked when the *paṇḍal* was going to be built. Today 350 devotees were expected to arrive from the West. The *paṇḍal* stage was supposed to have been erected, and festivities, including theater, would begin in the evening. But the devotees, irrepressibly absorbed in the *grhastha-sannyāst* issue, could not refrain from pursuing it further.

"What is the distinction between the enjoying spirit and the renouncing spirit?" asked Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Swami, returning to the theme.

"Hmmm?" Prabhupāda asked. Although the question was pointed, he remained poised, and detached from their party divisions. His idea of what to do was definite, but his method of teaching it was careful and gradual. He already knew well the difficult task of satisfying divergent views among his strong-minded disciples. For years he had been making the ultimate decisions and teaching his disciples how to go forward in a united way. Once again, an issue was budding that only he could solve—if they would listen.

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa: "For example, as we have been discussing, there are different tendencies between the *brahmacārtis* and the *grhasthas*. The attitude of the *brahmacārtis* is toward renunciation. If a *brahmacārt* gives up his *brahmacārt* life to become a *grhastha*, that means he is more inclined to the enjoying spirit. At least to some extent. So how to deal with this situation?"

Prabhupāda: "If you want to enjoy, who can stop you?"

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "But we cannot support it. We cannot support his enjoyment. That he should take on himself."

Prabhupāda: "According to different positions and attitudes, the four āśramas are there—*brahmocārī*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, *saṇyāsa*. This means that everyone is not on the equal platform. There are different platforms. But the whole idea is how to give up the propensity of enjoyment. That is wanted."

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa: "We find in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Śukadeva Gosvāmī would approach the householders in the morning just so long as to give them a little bit of spiritual knowledge, and he would accept the offering of some milk. So the *saṇyāsīs* and renunciants, generally they wouldn't very much relish the association of householders because of this enjoying spirit and the association that it entails. So we are finding also within our Society that those who are inclined to remaining celibate, they are finding the association of persons even within our movement who have this enjoying spirit to be somewhat detrimental to their own spiritual life."

Prabhupāda: "Then what is your proposal? You should drive them away?"

Madhudvisa: "Unless there is association, then they will never become purified."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "No, that is not the problem, because everyone comes together for association. They come together in the temple for *kīrtana*, for lectures, for *prasādom* . . . These things are common activities. There's no question that we should not have common activities between all the āśramas. But for living there must be separate arrangement."

Prabhupāda: "Now, even in the temple, you are complaining that a husband and wife are talking."

Prabhupāda seemed almost coy in the way he gradually led and manipulated the issue. He was also hearing more clearly the minds and hearts of his divided disciples.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "Yes, they are not talking *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*."

Prabhupāda: "That you will find everywhere."

Bhāgavata: "There's a complaint that sometimes is made that there's too much aversion on the part of the *brahmacārīs*. But isn't that a quality of a *brahmocārī*, that he should have a healthy contempt for sense gratification?"

Prabhupāda: "I do not follow."

The devotees crowded around as closely as possible. This was an important point.

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa: "He's saying that sometimes the *brahmacārīs* and even

the *sannyasīs* may have a strong aversion to association with women and householder life. But sometimes the *grhasthas* will criticize the *sannyasīs* and *brahmacārīs* and say, 'This is fanaticism' The *grhasthas* say that this is just as bad as the enjoying spirit, because a *sannyasī* is meditating on the same thing, except that he's averse to it. So Bhāgavata dāsa's question is, 'Is it better to be neutral or to be averse?'"

Prabhupāda "These are all fanaticism. Real unity is in advancing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Kalau nasty eva nāsty eva*. In the Kali yuga you cannot strictly follow, neither I can strictly follow. If I criticize you, if you criticize me, then we go far away from our real life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa "So is it correct to say that if we are not Kṛṣṇa conscious, then if it's not the *grhastha* problem it would be some other problem?"

Prabhupāda "Yes. We should always remember that either *grhastha* or *brahmacārī* or *sannyasī*, nobody can strictly follow all the rules and regulations. In the Kali yuga it is not possible. If I simply find fault with you, and if you find fault with me, then it will be factional, and our real business will be hampered. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu has recommended that *harī nama*, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, should be very rigidly performed, which is common for everyone—*grhastha*, *vanaprastha*, and *sannyāsa*. They should always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, then everything will be adjusted. Otherwise, it is impossible to advance. We shall be complicated with the details only. This is called *nīyamāgraha*. I think I have explained it."

Madhudviṣa "Yes, in *The Nectar of Instruction*."

Prabhupāda, "*Nīyamāgraha* is *nnt gñnd*. *Niyama* means 'regulative principles,' and *āgraha* means 'not to accept.' *Āgraha* means the opposite—too eager to accept the regulative principles, but no advancement spiritually. Both of them are called *nīyamāgraha*. So the basic principle is that *nīyamāgraha* is not recommended. If we advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by the simple method of chanting twenty-four hours—*kīrtanīyah sada harī*—then things will be automatically adjusted."

"You cannot find in Kali yuga that everything is being done very correctly to the point, that is very difficult. Just like our poet Allen Ginsberg, he was always accusing me, 'Swamiji, you are very conservative and strict.' Actually I told him, 'I am never strict. Neither I am conservative. If I become conservative, then I cannot live here for a moment.' So I am not at all conservative. I was living with one boy, Carl Yeagers. I was cooking and I saw in the refrigerator some pieces of meat for his cat. So still I kept my food in that refrigerator. What can be done?"

They had been talking for over an hour, and Prabhupāda had given definitive instructions. But it was not over yet. It was clear, however, who was in control.

Later that morning, 350 devotees approached the precincts of Mayāpur in a caravan of buses from the Calcutta airport. For most of the arriving devotees, this would be their first visit to Māyāpur, and their excitement countered the fatigue of the long journey from the West. Free of worldly concerns, they had come to India to visit Śrīdhāma Mayapur and to see Śrīla Prabhupada again.

After three hours on the road, the buses had entered Māyapur, and soon the devotees were seeing the Gaudiya Math temples, the Śrīvāsa Angana, the *samodhi* of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī, and the birthsite of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, all appearing one after the other, as the buses, horns blaring almost incessantly, veered around the winding turns of Bhaktisiddhanta Road. Villagers on foot and in rickshas, buffalo, goats, and cows moved hurriedly aside. Local residents looked up with curiosity and surprise at the sight of hundreds of Western *bhaktas* arriving to celebrate Gaura purnima.

Then the arriving devotees saw, on the flat Mayāpur landscape, the pinkish hue and beautiful features of ISKCON's Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, the place Śrīla Prabhupada had prepared for them, the home of which they had heard so much. As the buses arrived at the gate to the ISKCON property, the devotees cheered to see the new domes and fields of flowers. And their eagerness to see Śrīla Prabhupāda increased. There would be formalities of registering and receiving a room, a few complications in locating and settling in, but nothing major. They were home now among fellow devotees. Soon they would be able to bathe in the Ganges and to hear the schedule for *parikramas* to the holy places.

Some devotees rested, while others met with friends from various places in the world. They shared the latest news and received experienced advice about the Ganges' swift current and about avoiding dysentery and mosquitoes. By early evening they had all moved into their rooms and taken *prasādom*. The *sohnai* musicians, in a small room above the entrance gate, began playing an evening *rāga*. The sky darkened, and devotees began gathering in the brightly lit temple room for a gigantic *kīrtano*.

These devotees had been working very hard in various cities throughout the world, and coming to Māyapur was like a reward for their austerities.

and patient service. Now they could relax and enjoy spiritual life, with no responsibilities other than to worship the Deities, to see and hear Śrīla Prabhupāda, to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and to simply be Kṛṣṇa conscious in the eternal abode of Lord Caitanya.

When Prabhupāda heard that now almost six hundred devotees were gathered in his Mayāpur place of worship, he was very pleased. He inquired whether the *prasadam* and accommodations were sufficient and whether there would be a full schedule of engagements for everyone. Otherwise, he said, if the devotees remained idle, they would get sick or would gossip. He said everyone should simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, go on *parikṛmā*, and engage in *kṛṣṇa katha*.

Some of the new arrivals, especially temple presidents, were drawn into the schism regarding *grhasthas* and *sannyasis*. Now that all the temple presidents were together, they called for a special meeting, rallying together in their discontent. They disliked the resolutions restricting the place of *grhasthas* in ISKCON, and as they spoke and compared opinions, they found a particular focus for their grievances. Most of the objections were coming from the North American temple presidents and were aimed at the Rādhā Dāmodara traveling *sankīrtana* party, led by Tamālā Kṛṣṇa Goswamī. The conflict had been building for at least a year, ever since Tamālā Kṛṣṇa had formed the Rādhā Dāmodara party. Within that year, the party had grown to about 150 men traveling all over North America and distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Prabhupāda had praised the party, which was responsible for thirty to forty percent of the total remittances to the American BBT. Men on the Rādhā Dāmodara party lived with spiritually advanced *sannyasis*, they developed traits of austerity and detachment and had an enthusiasm for remaining celibate, without a need for marriage.

The Rādhā Dāmodara party broke all records for book distribution and outdid all other zones and temples. An elite army of *sankīrtana* soldiers, they were the recognized world leaders of book distribution. More than eighty members of the party had arrived at the Mayāpur festival, and they were given a special reserved section in the best building for their residence.

But in their zealotry for renunciation and *sankīrtana* leadership, some of the Rādhā Dāmodara *brahmacāris* had developed a condescending attitude toward temple life and householders. This materialistic conception had reached the point where some men were judging the worth of a devotee on the basis of whether he wore white cloth (as a *grhastha*)

or saffron (as a *sannyāst* or *brahmacārī*). Anyone in white could not be a spiritually advanced devotee. At least, this was the misconception that the temple presidents felt had developed among some of the more immature members of the Rādhā-Dāmodara party.

The greatest grievance, however, was more practical than philosophical. The presidents claimed that the Rādhā-Dāmodara party was stealing men from the temples. The temple presidents compared stories and cited numerous instances to prove that men had been lured from their services in the temples to join the Rādhā-Dāmodara party. The philosophy that *sannyāst*s were superior to *gṛhasthas*, the presidents said, was being used in an opportunistic way to convince men—the very best *brahmacārī*s—to give up their posts in Prabhupāda's temple and join the Rādhā-Dāmodara group. This often caused serious difficulties.

The temple presidents considered the preaching of the Rādhā-Dāmodara party to be unbalanced and selfishly motivated. So acute had the disagreement grown that some temples had forbidden the Rādhā-Dāmodara party to visit, and some had banned Rādhā-Dāmodara *sannyāst*s from lecturing to the devotees. The Rādhā-Dāmodara men, however, saw these restrictions as further proof of the householders' small-mindedness and attachment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda bided his time on the volatile issue and went about his duties, receiving guests and supervising the management of the Māyāpur temple and the festival. He was lecturing daily in the temple and satisfying everyone. To his servants and secretaries, however, he revealed that the schism was causing him anxiety. That the temple presidents were angry disturbed him. One afternoon, he could not even take his nap because of worry.

"This is a very serious thing," he said to Hari-śauri during the massage "—this difference of *sonnyāso* and *gṛhastha*. Everything will be spoiled."

Hari-śauri compared the present schism to the schism that had destroyed the Gaudiya Math.

Another time, when sitting in his room, Prabhupāda picked up a decorative bookmark a *brahmocārīṇī* had made for him. "Such nice service," he said. "How can it be refused? I have never stopped them serving simply because they are women."

Rāmeśvara came to Prabhupāda's room and showed him some of the recent BBT publications. They discussed their business, turning at last to the *sannyāst-gṛhastha* issue. As Rāmeśvara began to offer his opinion, Prabhupāda asked that other available *sonnyāst*s and G.B.C. men come in for the discussion.

Rāmeśvara was championing the temples' cause, relating some of the financial and practical problems the temples were experiencing due to losing men to the Rādhā-Dāmodara party. When men left, then book distribution declined in those temples. In the face of the heavy propaganda for joining the traveling bus parties, how could the loyal temple devotees remain satisfied collecting money mostly for maintaining the temples, without being able to afford to distribute books? The temple devotees also wanted to have the ecstasy of book distribution, but that was becoming increasingly difficult due to the crippling tactics of the traveling bus parties. Rāmeśvara asked Śrīla Prabhupāda to clarify the philosophical misconception that *gṛhasthas* were not advanced enough to manage the *brahmacārtis*.

Prabhupāda mentioned the *sannyāst* Choṭa Haridāsa, whom Lord Caitanya had rejected for only slight association with a woman. Yet Lord Caitanya had embraced a *gṛhastha*, Śivānanda Sena, on learning that Śivānanda Sena's wife was pregnant. Prabhupāda said that although Lord Caitanya's relationship with His *sannyāsts* was different than His relationship with His *gṛhasthas*, both were transcendental. The *gṛhasthas* were encouraged to perform family duties and raise Kṛṣṇa conscious children.

Addressing the *sannyāsts* present, Prabhupāda said that for them to be dwelling so much on the activities of the householders was inappropriate. It meant that the *sannyāsts* were thinking about sex more than the householders were. If the *sannyāsts* were talking all day long about married life, they would become contaminated.

Prabhupāda then told a story to illustrate his point. Once two *brāhmanas* were about to cross a river when a lady appeared, in need of assistance in crossing. So one of the *brāhmanas* offered to carry her on his back. The other *brāhmaṇa* was shocked, but refrained from saying anything. After crossing the river, the lady thanked them very much and went her way. The two *brāhmanas* continued walking, but for hours the other *brāhmaṇa* continued to talk about the incident. "You let that woman climb on your back and touch your body," he said, and he continued talking. Finally the other *brāhmaṇa* corrected him: "I carried her on my back for ten minutes, but you've been carrying her on your mind for three hours!"

The temple presidents selected Jayādvaita, a *brahmacārī* expert in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy, to present their case before Śrīla

Prabhupāda Some of the GBC members holding the same views also went, and since much of the opposition was against the Rādhā Dāmodara party, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswamī also came, to defend his party The many members of the Rādhā-Dāmodara party, who had come to Māyāpur looking for spiritual bliss after a year of demanding *sankīrtana* service, were hearing themselves criticized and wanted to retaliate. The jubilant, spiritual atmosphere of the festival was threatened by a political rift

Jayadvaita explained to Prabhupāda that the temple presidents felt the propaganda that *grhasthas* were incompetent to lead *brahmacārīs* was actually just a device The real issue was men and money By telling the temple *brahmacārīs* not to work under *grhasthas*, the Rādhā Dāmodara *sannyāsīs* were able to lure the men from their authorized services in the temples

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa agreed that if such false ideas were circulating, then they should be stopped, but he maintained that his party was not actually perpetrating such a philosophy

Accusations passed back and forth before Śrīla Prabhupāda, who then delivered his opinion "The standard should be not discrimination between *grhastha* and *sannyāsī*. We should simply see according to the advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness *Yeī kṛṣṇa tattva vetā, sei 'guru' haya*.* This principle should be followed—by his advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness *Phalena paricīyate* Judge by the results, not by the dress We can see his position By making party politics, everything will be finished"

Prabhupāda said that a *brahmacārī* generally assisted a *sannyāsī*, and a *sannyāsī* was a preacher The *grhastha* is also the appropriate man to take care of the temple If a *brahmacārī* wanted to travel with a *sannyāsī*, therefore, that was all right "But if he has a responsibility," said Prabhupāda, "he must stay" The real point, he said, was that the devotees should all think of themselves as servants of the six Gosvāmīs The whole problem before them was caused by "forgetting we are servant of Kṛṣṇa"

"It is not that a particular service is especially for a *grhastha* or a *sannyāsī*," Prabhupāda continued "He must be *kṛṣṇa dāsa* A servant's service is judged by the results Why this party and that party? *Yeī kṛṣṇa tattva vetā, sei 'guru' haya*. Bhaktivinoda was a *grhastha*. Bhaktisiddhānta was a *sannyāsī* Is one better than the other? No So there should not be threatening We are now worldwide organization"

* "Regardless of social status, anyone who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is qualified to become a spiritual master" (Cc *Madhya* 8.128)

Prabhupāda repeatedly quoted the verse *kibā vipra, kibā nyāṣṭ, śūdra kene naya/yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-veṭṭā, sei 'guru' haya*, thus dispelling the contention that *āśrama* determines the quality of a devotee. Whoever knows the science of Kṛṣṇa, whoever is fully engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda stressed, that person is a pure devotee.

A *sannyāṣṭ*, Prabhupāda said, could preach, but he could also manage. A *gṛhastha* could manage, but could also preach. Although Prabhupāda had already brought up these points, now he was settling the issue completely. This discrimination, he said, must stop. It was not Kṛṣṇa conscious. And the G.B.C. should remove all resolutions discriminating against *gṛhasthas*.

Prabhupāda emphasized that the real standard was to be *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*, the servant of Kṛṣṇa. In that surrendered mood, a devotee should be expert and willing to do whatever service was needed. He gave the example that some fifty years ago, when he had been the manager in Bose's laboratory in Calcutta, the workers had gone on strike. To the remaining workers he had said, "Come on, let's pack." They had accepted the menial labor, and the strike had been ended. Similarly, whatever capacity of service was required, a devotee should do it. "We must be very stubborn servant of Kṛṣṇa," Prabhupāda said.

Prabhupāda pointed out that he was probably the first bona fide *sannyāṣṭ* to arrange for his disciples' marriages. Certainly he did not encourage disobeying the regulative principles, he said, but the real business was Kṛṣṇa's service. If that included arranging for marriages, then it should be done. "But generally the division is that the *sannyāṣṭ* is fully engaged in preaching," he said. "And the *sannyāṣṭs*' preaching should not be checked. Whoever is in charge of something, let him remain. If there is some discrepancy, try to correct it. In every rumor there is a grain of truth."

Prabhupāda was not only defining and settling the immediate quarrels, but he was elevating all the devotees to the level of dedicated and inspired Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He was not siding with one party or watering down the philosophy to make peace. He was appealing to his disciples' intelligence. And more than that, he was entering their hearts and making them satisfied and truly desirous of working with one another.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped speaking, he asked for a response. Jayādvaita said he thought the presidents would be completely satisfied with Prabhupāda's decisions. Tamālā Kṛṣṇa said that the G.B.C. would also be satisfied and that everyone, by Prabhupāda's grace, could now go forward with the right understanding.

The devotees then left Prabhupāda's room in a joyful mood, prepared to join the others and take part in an uplifting, nonpolitical Gaura-pūrṇimā festival.

The next morning Prabhupāda went for his walk on the roof of the Māyāpur building. As soon as he began circumambulating on the roof, at least two dozen devotees, mostly temple presidents and *sannyāsīs*, joined him.

The temple presidents felt victorious. Their positions were vindicated, and the misunderstandings of the philosophy had been straightened out. Now everything was proper. The whole affair had increased the devotees' faith in Prabhupāda and in the wisdom of following his order without false prestige.

As they walked, Pañcadraviḍa Swami, in a mood of humorous relief to the tension of the past days, began questioning Prabhupāda in an odd way.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said, "there is one thing I don't understand. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, that story of Śakṣī-Gopāla—the Deity who came to witness for the young *brāhmaṇa*? So the young man was serving the old *brāhmaṇa*, and then the old *brāhmaṇa* promised the hand of his daughter in marriage, and then the Deity came to bear witness. So if he was such a pure devotee, why did he call the Deity to come such a great distance just so he could become married? Why didn't he want to remain single? And why did he make the Deity come just for his marriage?"

It was not only the words but the way Pañcadraviḍa said them, jesting in the role of an overly-critical *sannyāsī*. And Prabhupāda immediately entered the joking spirit: "We are not against marriage. We are against illicit sex. But because no woman would have you, now you are saying that no one should marry. Just see the psychology here."

The devotees began to laugh wildly.

"This is the sour grapes philosophy," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Because no woman will have you, nobody wants you, therefore you are feeling this rejection and thinking that nobody should get married."

On the morning of Gaura-pūrṇimā, the appearance day of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured on a *Bhāgavatam* verse spoken by Prahlaḍa Mahārāja to Lord Nṛsimhadeva. The verse (*Bhag.* 7.9.38) indirectly refers to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance.

In this way, my Lord, You have appeared in different incarnations, as

human beings, as animals, as a great saintly person, as demigods and as a fish and a tortoise. In this way you maintain the whole creation and different planetary systems and kill the demoniac principles in every age. My Lord, therefore, protect the principles of religion. In the age of Kali You do not assert Yourself as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore You are known as Tri-yuga, or the Lord who appears in three *yugas*.

Seated comfortably on his *vyāsāsana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda looked out over his reading spectacles at the long hall full of seated disciples. Two devotees fanned him with big *cāmara* whisks. The many glass chandeliers sparkled. At the opposite end of the hall stood the forms of Rādhā-Mādhava and Lord Csitanya.

"So here is a very specific statement about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu," said Prabhupāda. "He is *avatāra*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the same Supreme Personality of Godhead, but He is *channa*. *Channa* means covered, not directly. Because He has appeared as a devotee."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained why the Supreme Lord appeared in Kali-yuga as a devotee. "When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared, He ordered everyone to 'Surrender to Me.' But they took it, 'Who is this person asking like that? What right does he have? Why shall I give up?' But God Himself, the Supreme Being, He *must* order. That is God. But we think otherwise: 'Who is this man? Why is he ordering? Why shall I give up?'"

The whole process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is submission, surrender to Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained. But the way to surrender to Kṛṣṇa is to submit to His devotee, His representative.

"So Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared this day for giving mercy to the fallen souls who are so foolish they cannot take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is personally teaching them. That is this *kīrtana*."

Later that morning Prabhupāda came down to the temple room again, this time to perform initiations. Fifteen devotees were receiving brahminical initiation, twenty-five were receiving first initiation, and seven men were receiving *sannyāsa*. Again Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted the verse that had become a theme for the festival: *kibā vipra, kibā nyāsi, śūdra kene naya*. "Either he is a *gṛhasṭha* or a *sannyāsi*, it doesn't matter. He must become a *guru*. How? *Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-rettā*. One who knows the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one who understands Kṛṣṇa, he can become a *guru*. *Guru* is the post given to the *sannyāsis* and to the *brāhmanas*. Without becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, nobody can become a *sannyāsi*, and the *sannyāsi* is sup-

posed to be the *guru* of both all the *āśramas* and all the *vornos*. So, for preaching work we require so many *sannyasīs*. People are suffering all over the world for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Śrīla Prabhupāda cautioned the young men to live as very strict *sannyasīs*. He also stressed that all his disciples should be training to become qualified as *gurus*. He quoted, "*Yare dekho tare kaha kṛṣṇo upadeśa*. Anywhere, either you are in this district or that district, it doesn't matter. Either you are at home or outside home, it doesn't matter. You become a *guru*—everyone. 'How shall I become *guru*? I have no qualification.' Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that you don't require any qualification. You simply require one qualification, that you repeat the instruction of *Bhagavad gītā*, that's all. *Yare dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇo upadeśa*. You become a *guru*. Don't adulterate *kṛṣṇa upodeśa* like a rascal or nonsense. Present it as it is—*Bhagavad gītā*. Then you can become a *guru*. You can become a *guru* in your family, you can become a *guru* in your society, your nation—wherever you are. And if it is possible, you go outside and preach this mission of *Bhagavad gītā*. Therefore our movement's name is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever Kṛṣṇa says, you accept and preach. You become *guru*."

On Gaura pūrṇimā day everyone fasted until moonrise, and most of the devotees walked down to the Ganges to bathe. Jayapatāka Swamī told them that, according to *śāstra*, whoever bathed in the Ganges at Mayapur during Gaura pūrṇimā would become liberated from birth and death. In the early evening, pilgrims began arriving in great numbers. From all over West Bengal, people yearly visited the temples in Mayapur, especially the birthsite of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and more recently ISKCON's Mayapur Chandrodāya Manṁr.

In Calcutta, people had seen the billboards advertising the ISKCON Gaura pūrṇimā festival, and by word of mouth tens of thousands of villagers had heard about the longest building in West Bengal and the "golden" Deity of Rādhā Mādhava. Devotees greeted the guests with *prasādam* and sold copies of *Gītār gān*, Śrīla Prabhupāda's Bengali versification of *Bhagavad gītā*.

By nighttime long streams of people were flowing in and out of the front gates. The crowds raised a cloud of dust, and the air filled with sounds of ricksha bells, women singing, friends talking, and the amplified *kīrtana* emanating from the temple. Most of the visitors walked through the temple, visited the photo exhibit, and then stayed for awhile, watching the *kīrtana* or the theater performance at the outdoor *paṇḍāl* stage.

Although the number of visitors approached a hundred thousand, the scene remained peaceful, as people moved along without pushing or hurrying, observing the customary respect of visiting a holy place.

Dhruvanātha: The most ecstatic highlight of the festival was when, after greeting the Deities in the morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda would circumambulate the temple. There was a bell on either side of the Deity room, and as we circumambulated and Prabhupāda came to the bells, a devotee would hand him the rope. As the devotees chanted and danced ecstatically, Prabhupāda would pull the bell in time to the kīrtana, and at the same time he would raise his left hand to indicate that devotees should chant and dance more and more.

Anakadundubhi: Śrīla Prabhupāda would sit on the veranda looking over all of Māyāpur. I saw him watching some boys herding their cows. He was absorbed in watching the whole place. Then someone gave him a little pair of binoculars, and he would look out across Māyāpur, with one finger up in the air. He looked like a general. He was looking across to Bhaktivīnoda Thākura's house, and then he spotted the birthplace of Lord Caitanya. He looked at it very closely, and then he said, "Almost no men. They have no men."

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami: One day Prabhupāda called in the G.B.C. members. It was in the afternoon, and we could see he was feeling very blissful. He was hearing the kīrtana in the temple. He said everyone should come to Māyāpur and chant twenty-four hours a day. He said, "There is so much room here. The morning class is so nice—Prahāda Mahārāja's instruction a million years ago. A five-year-old boy was speaking. The chanting, according to Bhaktivīnoda Thākura, is the only solace. It is nothing material, the chanting. Ajāmila called the name of Nārāyaṇa and was saved."

Prabhupāda said that batches of devotees should come to Māyāpur so that there should always be five hundred men present. Then a devotee said, "In America they are trying to chant more, twelve hours a day, trying to get a twenty-four hour kīrtana schedule." "Yes, everywhere," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "this chanting should go on. Instead of meetings, resolutions, dissolutions, revolutions, and then no solutions, there should be chanting."

Gopavīndapāla: I had guard duty, and Prabhupāda would get up around twelve midnight or one o'clock. He would be upstairs, and I would be

one floor below He was chanting a lot, pacing back and forth on the balcony I couldn't see him, but I could see his shaven head silhouetted He was walking about ten steps one way and then ten steps the other way I had a three hour watch, and I sat there chanting my japa and watching Prabhupada's head go back and forth Sometimes I could hear when his chanting was louder I was reminded of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī, because Śrīla Prabhupada described many times the balcony where Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī paced back and forth, envisioning and considering how to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement So Prabhupada was also pacing and thinking how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness

Ānakadundubhī In Prabhupada's room on the wall there was a beautiful sandalwood carving of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, just like on the Kṛṣṇa book cover, with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa standing, Rādhārānī with Her arm around Kṛṣṇa, holding His flute, and Kṛṣṇa holding His cape around Her When there weren't any guests for darsana, Prabhupada would just sit and look at that picture. He loved it very much When I would take his garland up to him, he would wear it during darsana for about an hour and a half, then after darsana he would get up and go to the bathroom after first taking the garland off Then he would come back and give the garland to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa A number of times I gave him garlands made of very fragrant little white flowers that Jananīwasa would give me. Prabhupada used to take that garland and put it on Rādhā Kṛṣṇa in such a beautiful way It was the perfection of Deity worship, the way he put that little garland there

Jananīwasa Just before Prabhupāda left, I came up and I asked him, "Frankincense, Śrīla Prabhupada?" There was no one else in the room at the time, and he was just chanting japa sitting in his room I started to fill up the room with smoke from the frankincense Smoke was coming out everywhere, and Prabhupāda kept the windows closed He looked up and said, "This creates such an atmosphere of spiritual understanding This is so nice, so nice." Then he started chanting again

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa When Prabhupāda was finally finished conducting the Mayāpur festival, I asked him if he was tired Prabhupāda said "What tired? So many people are coming and hearing about Kṛṣṇa. When preaching you feel refreshed"

CHAPTER SIX

The Lame Man and the Blind Man

Ever since the BBT Press marathon in the summer of 1975, the Press had continued to keep up with Śrīla Prabhupāda's writing. A sweet, transcendental competition had developed between Prabhupada, his Press, and the book distributors. In November of 1975, Prabhupada had written to one of the leading book distributors,

The BBT says that they are publishing at the speed of my translating and that you will distribute at the pace of publishing. That's nice. But still I am ahead in my translation work. They owe me now the sixth canto of *Srīmad Bhagavatam*. I am working already on the seventh canto.

In recent months, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda's literary output had been diminishing, mostly because of his involvement in management. His direct supervision of the construction in Bombay, his month-long managerial drive in Vṛndāvana, his struggle to heal a major ISKCON schism—such activities were not conducive to writing. In Māyāpur when the devotees had failed to control the slamming of doors, he had complained bitterly that this “heart cracking” sound interrupted his meditative translating. He explained that he sometimes thought for two or three days about a single purport before actually writing it.

Actually, the word *translating* is incomplete in describing Śrīla Prabhupāda's writing. Translating involved only the verses and synonyms, but Prabhupāda's deepest meditations—what he referred to as his “personal ecstasies”—were his Bhaktivedanta purports. Composing the purports, as well as translating the verses, came best when he could think

about them throughout the day, not just when he turned on his dictating machine at one A.M. He was translating the extremely grave and complex Vedic knowledge into a modern context, thus making it understandable to Western readers. And it was a great, demanding task.

To best speak to the people of the world through his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* writings, Śrīla Prabhupāda required a very conducive situation. After the Mayāpur festival, therefore, he formulated an itinerary that, in about a month's time, would bring him to Hawaii. There he expected to find an atmosphere beneficial for his literary work. His traveling secretary, Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Swami, wrote ahead to Hawaii shortly after the Mayāpur festival.

Prabhupada must do a lot of translating, so don't set up programs outside. And if there have to be guests, it must be restricted to 5 p.m. only, until about 6:30 each evening. If these things are nicely arranged, then Prabhupada will stay some time to translate.

Since Prabhupāda's itinerary also included another U.S. tour, his secretary wrote ahead to Kīrtanānanda Swami in New Vrindaban.

Prabhupada has revealed a bit more about things. He said that as time goes on he is less and less concerned about seeing visitors. He mentioned that Aurobindo saw visitors only once a year on his birthday. Although Prabhupada deemed this is not possible now, I asked him where he would like to go for some time to translate. He said New Vrindaban, and he said he would go there after the Ratha-yatra in New York.

Hawaii

May 3, 1976

After brief visits in several Indian cities, as well as stops in Melbourne, Auckland, and Fiji, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in Hawaii on schedule. Immediately he began to increase his writing. The devotees were keenly noting the number of digits he ran up each night on his dictating machine, which for them was like a measure of the benediction for all humanity. Whereas in India he had done usually no more than a hundred digits a day, and sometimes none, in Hawaii his rate jumped to two hundred and even three hundred, day after day. Hari-śauri, who had accompanied Prabhupāda from Vṛndāvana as his servant, wrote in his diary, "Prabhupada is translating like anything now, and he did 290 digits again last night."

The temple was in a quiet neighborhood, with several acres of gardenlike property. In the backyard stood a large, stately banyan tree, and in the front, the largest *tulasi* bushes anywhere in ISKCON. The devotees grew their own vegetables, and flowers, mangoes, and coconuts were so plentiful that they were available free. The weather was sunny, interspersed with occasional showers.

Prabhupada felt ill and could not sleep more than one and a half hours at night and one or two hours during the day. But being transcendental, he used this inability to sleep as another way to increase his writing time. Despite his emphasis on writing, however, he continued lecturing in the temple, going on morning walks, holding discussions on the beach, and daily answering his mail. Still, Hawaii was far from being like Vrndavana or Calcutta, where old friends and new admirers demanded hours of his time. Here he was mostly alone with his trained staff.

He had been in Honolulu about a week when he announced one morning, walking along Waikiki Beach, that he expected to finish that night the last purport to the Seventh Canto. When Hari saurī expressed his happiness to hear this, Prabhupada replied, "Oh, I can finish very quickly, but I have to present it for your understanding. It requires deep thought, very carefully, to present it for the common man."

That night around nine, Prabhupada called for Hari saurī and said that he would not take his evening massage, he wanted the time for finishing the Seventh Canto. Shutting the door and returning to his desk, he worked all night until five in the morning. At the end of the Seventh Canto, he dictated a closing remark:

—Completed on the night of *Vaiśākṣī śuklā Ekādaśī*, the tenth of May, 1976 in the temple of the *Pañcalāitva*, New Navadvīpa (Honolulu), by the mercy of *śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi gaura bhakta vrnda*. Thus we may happily chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare! Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Immediately Prabhupada turned to the Eighth Canto, beginning with a prayer: "First of all, let me offer my humble, respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswamī Prabhupada." Prabhupada explained that his spiritual master had instructed him at Radhākunda in 1935 to stress book production more than temple construction. He had followed that

instruction, beginning with his starting *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1944, and in 1958 he had begun *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. As soon as he had published three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in India, he had started for the U.S. in August 1965.

I am continuously trying to publish books, as suggested by my spiritual master. Now, in this year, 1976, I have completed the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and a summary of the Tenth Canto has already been published as *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*. Still, the Eighth Canto, Ninth Canto, Tenth Canto, Eleventh Canto and Twelfth Canto are yet to be published. On this occasion, therefore, I am praying to my spiritual master to give me strength to finish this work. I am neither a great scholar nor a great devotee; I am simply a humble servant of my spiritual master, and to the best of my ability I am trying to please him by publishing these books, with the cooperation of my disciples in America. Fortunately, scholars all over the world are appreciating these publications. Let us cooperatively publish more and more volumes of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* just to please His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Prabhupāda said he was making the *Bhāgavatam* understandable for the common man. This did not mean his writings were lacking in substance; they were pure substance. But in the essential spirit of the *Bhāgavatam* itself, Prabhupāda was omitting anything extraneous and distracting, selecting from the commentaries of the previous *ācāryas* whatever would best impel his readers to pure devotional service. At the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the author, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, states that the *Bhāgavatam* excludes all materially motivated forms of religiosity and offers only pure devotional service. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is therefore called the ripened fruit of the tree of Vedic knowledge. And just as the *Bhāgavatam* is itself the most essential spiritual knowledge, so Śrīla Prabhupāda, in translating and commenting on the *Bhāgavatam*, utilized the same spirit of delivering the pure message, without any speculation or deviation.

According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān śayam*. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all incarnations, the cause of all causes. And Prabhupāda revealed this conclusion on every page. Although some Sanskrit scholars disagreed with Prabhupāda's emphasis on Kṛṣṇa, his "Kṛṣṇa-izing" of the Sanskrit was not whimsical but followed strictly the ancient tradition of *paramparā*. Overwhelmingly, those university scholars who seriously read Prabhupāda's

books appreciated the faithful quality of his *parampara* rendering. Reviews came from all over the world.

“ For those who have no access to the Sanskrit language, these books convey, in superb manner, the message of the *Bhagovotom* ” Dr Alaka Hejib, Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University

“ It is a deeply felt, powerfully conceived, and beautifully explained work. I don't know whether to praise more this translation of the *Bhagavad gita*, its daring method of explanation, or the endless fertility of its ideas. I have never seen any other work on the *Gita* with such an important voice and style. It will occupy a significant place in the intellectual and ethical life of modern man for a long time to come.” Dr Shaligram Shukla, Professor of Linguistics, Georgetown University

“ For the first time we possess a readily accessible edition for this great religious classic that will provide opportunity for scholars in Indian literature and followers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness tradition alike to compare the original text with a modern English translation and become acquainted with the deeper spiritual meaning of this work through the learned commentary of Śrī Bhaktivedānta.

“ Anyone who gives a close reading to the commentary will sense that here, as in his other works, Śrī Bhaktivedānta has combined a healthy mixture of the fervent devotion and aesthetic sensitivity of a devotee and the intellectual rigor of a textual scholar. At no point does the author allow the intended meaning of the text to be eclipsed by the promotion of a particular doctrinal persuasion.

“ These exquisitely wrought volumes will be a welcome addition to the libraries of all persons who are committed to the study of Indian spirituality and religious literature, whether their interests are sparked by the motivations of the scholar, the devotee, or the general reader.” Dr J. Bruce Long, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University

“This English edition translated by A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda is superb. It contains the original Sanskrit and Bengali verses with their English transliteration, synonyms, translations, and elaborate purports, easily bearing testimony to the author's profound knowledge of the subject.” Dr O. B. L. Kapoor, Emeritus Chairman and Professor, Department of Philosophy, Government Postgraduate College, Gyanpur, India

The Vedic literature mentions various spiritual paths and forms of *yoga*,

and unless the commentator has realized the highest Vedic conclusion, he can easily miss the essential message of the *Bhāgavatam*. Indeed, impersonalist commentators have attempted to use the *Bhāgavatam* to support their speculations that the individual soul is in all respects one with the Supreme—even though this contradicts the purpose of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. As a commentator on the Vedic literature, Śrīla Prabhupāda was distinguished, even among Vaiṣṇava scholars, because of his being in disciplic succession from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is glorified as *patita-pāvana*, the savior of the most fallen. As a follower and empowered representative of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Prabhupāda was faithfully and perfectly carrying on the tradition of rescuing fallen souls, bringing them back to their original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Prabhupāda's making *Bhāgavatam*'s message "available," therefore, did not mean mere simplification. It meant urgently addressing the reader to give up the world of illusion and take to the eternal liberation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda was making available to the average reader spiritual truth that had been hidden and unavailable, even to austere practitioners of *yoga* and learned *brāhmanas* proficient in Sanskrit. "Old wine in new bottles," Prabhupāda called it.

The Vaiṣṇava's arguments against impersonalism had been chalked out by Madhvācārya and Rāmānujācārya and later synthesized by Lord Caitanya into the philosophy of *acintya bhedābheda-tattva*, "simultaneous oneness and difference." These eternal truths had to be presented in every age, but in the traditional debates between the Vaiṣṇavas and the impersonalists, the authoritative basis had always been Vedic scripture.

Modern society, however, was so degraded that a preacher could no longer appeal to the authority of Vedic scripture—no one would accept it. Śrīla Prabhupāda's writings, therefore, dealt with such theories as the origin of life by chance, Darwinian evolution, and chemical evolution. And he defeated them all with strong logic, establishing that life comes from life, not from dead matter. Prabhupāda had dedicated one of his first books, *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, to "the scientists of the world," and had even adapted the *Bhagavad-gītā* verses quoted in that book into scientific jargon of "matter and antimatter." Deftly he used both *śāstra* and logic to establish the Vedic conclusion.

Prabhupāda's writings also combatted the false teachings of bogus *yogis*, *gurus*, and "incarnations," who had appeared like a tidal wave of falsity in Kali-yuga, both in India and in the West. His writings criticized modern political institutions also, analyzing why monarchies fell, why democracy was also failing, and how dictatorship would increasingly harass the citizens.

The governments' policies of abusive taxation and their propaganda to bring people to the cities to work in the factories, abandoning simple, agrarian life, were all discussed in light of the scriptures

In his travels, Śrīla Prabhupāda had observed the rampant degradation of human society sexual liberation, the latest fads in intoxication, and the vicious crimes of animal slaughter and meat eating *A Bhagavad gītā* purport dealt specifically with the threat of nuclear holocaust

Such people are considered the enemies of the world because ultimately they will invent or create something which will bring destruction to all Indirectly, this verse anticipates the invention of nuclear weapons, of which the world is today very proud At any moment war may take place, and these atomic weapons may create havoc Such things are created solely for the destruction of the world and this is indicated here Due to godlessness, such weapons are invented in human society, they are not meant for the peace and prosperity of the world

Prabhupāda's criticisms were strong and authoritative, befitting a true *acarya*, his uncompromising spirit was appealing He was not a timid scholar pointing out some obscure historical references Yet underlying his writing, a humble tone of request spoke to the heart As the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa, he asked everyone to please take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness and be restored to his original, constitutional position of eternity, bliss, and knowledge.

Prabhupāda was making his books practical But to do so required care and deep meditation He combined the thoughtfulness of a textual scholar with the practical applications of a transcendental social and political reformer So many scholars had already presented their English editions of *Bhagavad gītā* yet not a single reader had become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad gītā As It Is*, however, was creating thousands of devotees

More than simply rendering valuable Vedic literatures, Śrīla Prabhupāda had come to the West, starting in New York City, to establish a way of life based on that Vedic literature. Consequently, he had gained firsthand experience in bringing the most materialistic persons to the standard of renunciation and devotional service. His books, therefore, reflected these practical realizations, and many times in his purports he would relate his difficulties and triumphs in trying to introduce spiritual principles within materialistic society

In the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* he had presented the story

of Dakṣa's cursing Nārada Muni, after Nārada had instructed Dakṣa's sons in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The jealous father, considering Nārada his enemy, had cursed him to be always traveling, without any home. In his commentary, Śrīla Prabhupāda had written that he also had been cursed by the parents of his disciples; therefore, despite his having many centers around the world, he had to constantly travel and preach.

And in the Seventh Canto, while commenting on the demon Hiranyakaśipu's harassment of his son Prahlaḍa, Śrīla Prabhupāda had related the difficulties of the ISKCON devotees in distributing books amid the harassment of Hiranyakaśipu's modern counterparts.

Thus Prabhupāda was imbuing his literature with the thoughtfulness of his own personality, that of a pure devotee faithfully dedicating his body, mind, and words in service to the *Bhāgavatam*. As the word *bhāgavata* refers not only to narrations about the Supreme Lord but also to the Lord's devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda was himself *bhāgavata*. And through his books one could gain the inspiration of service to both the book and the person *bhāgavata*.

After two weeks in Hawaii, Śrīla Prabhupāda was well into the Eighth Canto, averaging up to three hundred digits daily. His health improved also, although his sleeping remained minimal. "Of course," Prabhupāda said reflectively, "it is very good from the spiritual point of view if you don't sleep much."

When news came of a temple president having difficulty with his G.B.C. authority, Śrīla Prabhupāda saw it as another example of how his writing work—his most important preaching—could be hampered by disruptions. He therefore composed a letter addressed to all the Governing Body Commissioners.

My dear G.B.C. disciples,

Please accept my blessings. Over the past ten years I have given the framework, and now we have become more than the British Empire. Even the British Empire was not as expansive as we. They had only a portion of the world, and we have not completed expanding. We must expand more and more unlimitedly. But I must now remind you that I have to complete the translation of the Srimad Bhagavatam. This is the greatest contribution; our books have given us a respectable position. People have no faith in this church or temple worship. Those days are gone. Of course, we have to maintain the temples as

it is necessary to keep our spirits high. Simply intellectualism will not do, there must be practical purification.

So I request you to relieve me of management responsibilities more and more so that I can complete the *Srimad Bhagavatam* translation. If I am always having to manage, then I cannot do my work on the books. It is documented I have to choose each word very soberly and if I have to think of management then I cannot do this. I cannot be like these rascals who present something mental concoction to cheat the public. So this task will not be finished without the cooperation of my appointed assistants, the GBC, temple presidents, and sannyasis. I have chosen my best men to be GBC and I do not want that the GBC should be disrespectful to the temple presidents. You can naturally consult me, but if the basic principle is weak, how will things go on? So please assist me in the management so that I can be free to finish the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, which will be our lasting contribution to the world.

While maintaining his excellent progress on *Śrīmad Bhagavatam*, Prabhupāda also got the opportunity in Hawaii to begin another book. His long time disciple and editor Hayagrīva wrote, asking to assist Śrīla Prabhupāda in a series of interview commentaries on the Western philosophers. This was the same project Prabhupāda had begun with his former secretary, Śyāmasundara, but when Śyāmasundara had abandoned his duties in ISKCON, he had also misplaced the tapes and transcripts of the considerable work they had done together.

Hayagrīva proposed to start again, beginning with Socrates and Plato. The process would be that Hayagrīva would present before Prabhupāda a summary of a particular Western thinker's philosophy. Prabhupāda would then respond extemporaneously, giving appreciation and criticism of the philosopher according to the Vedic viewpoint.

Prabhupāda and his disciples had been enthusiastic about the interviews done in former years, and Prabhupāda had even titled the series—"Dialectical Spiritualism." But when Śyāmasundara had misplaced the tapes, the project had dissipated. Now Hayagrīva, the former college English professor and original editor for *Back to Godhead* in America, asked to be allowed to come to Hawaii for reviving the philosophy book and for spending time with Prabhupāda.

Like various other disciples, Hayagrīva had given up strictly following the regulative principles. Śrīla Prabhupāda had come to tolerate the reality that some disciples, even after taking vows of initiation, would be unable to resist the strong pull of the senses and would give up the path of active

devotional service in ISKCON. In the early years, he and his followers had reacted with great shock whenever a devotee had gone away; but with time, as the unfortunate event had continued to occur, sometimes even striking down leading, trusted disciples, Prabhupāda had grown to live with it. But he never stopped feeling bereaved over a lost son or daughter, especially if that disciple had rendered him significant service. And he never withheld his affection from them or his open, loving invitation for them to return.

Such a case was Hayagrīva, a dear son who had come to Śrīla Prabhupāda during the summer of 1966 in New York. He had given valuable service, but had eventually been unable to follow the simple but strict principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now, after suffering the vicissitudes of material life, he had gathered his resolve to come back to his beloved spiritual master.

Hayagrīva entered Prabhupāda's room. "It's your old Hayagrīva, Prabhupāda," he said, and he fell to the floor, sobbing.

Prabhupāda gave him a garland and asked him how he and his family were doing. Then in the presence of the other devotees, Prabhupāda related how Hayagrīva had been sent by Kṛṣṇa to help him spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world.

When Hayagrīva said he had never forgotten Prabhupāda, even for a day, Prabhupāda replied, "And I also never forgot you. I was thinking, 'Has Hayagrīva gone away?' I was thinking like that." Prabhupāda's voice broke, his eyes filled with tears, and he could not speak. Finally he asked everyone to leave the room.

Prabhupāda and Hayagrīva began meeting daily, sometimes for as long as two or three hours. *Dialectical Spiritualism* was again underway, moving side by side with the Eighth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Hayagrīva was again in his original position, at Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet.

Although Prabhupāda had written to the G.B.C. requesting them to solve ISKCON's problems, he continued to keep informed of the problems as his assistants reluctantly reported to him the bad news. One day a telegram arrived from Madhudviṣa Swami, a dynamic G.B.C. man in charge of ISKCON in one region of the U.S. Madhudviṣa was having serious dif-

ficulty remaining strong in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In most cases, the difficulties of Prabhupāda's disciples were urges toward sensuality. Almost never did disciples turn against Prabhupāda, nor did they often reject the philosophical conclusions of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They simply fell victim to *māyā's* allurements.

Madhudviṣa's telegram was a resignation from the G.B.C. Although he wanted to continue in devotional service, he felt forced to resign due to spiritual weakness. The telegram gave no details, but Prabhupāda heard rumors that Madhudviṣa had had an affair and had left the temple. Prabhupāda said that this was his Godbrothers' main argument against Westerners' taking *sannyāsa*: they would not be able to maintain the strict vows. He said that a German Godbrother of his had also caused disruption by his intimate dealings with women.

"What can I do?" Prabhupāda said sadly. "I am working with all third-class men—fools and rascals. Things are going on simply by Kṛṣṇa's mercy." Prabhupāda sent a telegram back, asking Madhudviṣa to come and speak with him. Although he restrained his emotions, the devotees could see that he was distracted. It was another case of a strong affectionate bond for a son who had rendered wonderful service, a disciple whom he had patiently trained over the years. Again the possibility of Prabhupāda's retiring from active management looked doubtful.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said he was trying to engage fools, rascals—anyone—to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He was unable to find strict followers, but what could be done? If someone fell from *sannyāsa*, he said, then that person could become a *gṛhastha*. But no one should go away. Hari-śauri mentioned the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* story of Lord Caitanya and Choṣa Haridāsa. From that story, said Hari-śauri, it appeared to be very difficult for a fallen *sannyāst* to regain the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

"One who falls from *sannyāsa*," Prabhupāda replied, "is called *van-tāst*, one who vomits and then eats it."

"So if they become *gṛhasthas* again, then how can they get Lord Caitanya's mercy?" asked Hari-śauri.

"If the spiritual master gives that facility and makes that arrangement," said Prabhupāda, "then Kṛṣṇa will accept the arrangement. And later he can again become *sannyāsa*." It had happened before, and Prabhupāda mentioned a few cases where he had asked fallen *sannyāsts* to get married and stay in their service. "Of course, it is a shameful position," he said, "but what can be done? My Godbrothers and *sannyāsts* in India criticize me for giving *brāhmaṇa* and *sannyāsa* initiation and installing

Deities in the West and allowing women to stay in the temples. But for all that, I am expanding Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And for all their strictness, they are doing nothing. If I discriminate, then I will again be one alone, as I was in Vṛndāvana, and 'again become a mouse.'"

"It seems," said Hari śauri, "that it will take several generations before we can become purified."

"If one is sincere," Prabhupāda replied, "he can become purified even within one generation."

That same evening as Prabhupāda prepared to stay up all night translating, he was still thinking of Madhuvīṣa. Nevertheless, he turned to translating the texts in the chapter called "The Elephant Gajendra's Crisis." The chapter told about the king of elephants, Gajendra, who lived on the heavenly planets. One day Gajendra was bathing in the river along with his wives, when suddenly a crocodile attacked. The crocodile fastened his jaws on Gajendra's leg, and although the elephant was very powerful, he could not release himself from the strong grip of the crocodile while in the water.

"Thereafter," Śrīla Prabhupāda dictated, "because of being pulled into the water and fighting for many long years, the elephant became diminished in his mental, physical, and sensual strength. The crocodile, on the contrary, being an animal of the water, increased in enthusiasm, physical strength, and sensual power."

"I can do it very quickly," Prabhupāda had said, "but I have to meditate, how to prepare it for the common man." How could he convey the significance of this event, which happened millions of years ago between two animals on a heavenly planet? How to make it clear and understandable, and capture the essence of the significant Sanskrit words and the *paramparā* comments of *ācāryas* like Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī? In the quiet solitude of his room, Śrīla Prabhupāda began speaking his purport.

"In the fighting between the elephant and the crocodile, the difference was that although the elephant was extremely powerful, he was in a foreign place, in the water. During one thousand years of fighting he could not get any food, and under the circumstances his bodily strength diminished and because his bodily strength diminished, his mind also became weak and his senses less powerful. The crocodile, however, being an animal of the water, had no difficulties. He was getting food and was therefore getting mental strength and sensual encouragement. Thus while the elephant became reduced in strength, the crocodile became more and more powerful.

'Now, from this we may take the lesson that in our fight with *mayā*

we should not be in a position in which our strength, enthusiasm and senses will be unable to fight vigorously. Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has actually declared war against the illusory energy, in which all the living entities are rotting in a false understanding of civilization. The soldiers in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must always possess physical strength, enthusiasm and sensual power. To keep themselves fit, they must therefore place themselves in a normal condition of life.

"What constitutes a normal condition will not be the same for everyone," Prabhupāda continued, "and therefore there are divisions of *varṇaśrama*—*brahmana*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *sūdra*, *brahmacārya*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyāsa*. Especially in this age, Kālī yuga, it is advised that no one take *sannyāsa*.

"From this we can understand that in this age the *sannyāsa āśrama* is forbidden because people are not strong. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed us an example in taking *sannyāsa* at the age of twenty-four years, but even Sārvabhauma Bhāṭṭācārya advised Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to be extremely careful because He had taken *sannyāsa* at an early age. For preaching we give young boys *sannyāsa*, but actually it is being experienced that they are not fit for *sannyāsa*.

"There is no harm, however, if one thinks that he is unfit for *sannyāsa*, if he is very much agitated sexually, he should go to the *āśrama* where sex is allowed, namely the *grhastha āśrama*. That one has been found to be very weak in one place does not mean that he should stop fighting the crocodile of *māyā*. One should take shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, as we shall see Gaṇendra do, and at the same time one can be a *grhastha* if he is satisfied with sexual indulgence.

"There is no need to give up the fight. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore recommended, *sthitāṇe sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhiḥ*. One may stay in whichever *āśrama* is suitable for him, it is not essential that one take *sannyāsa*. If one is sexually agitated, he can enter the *grhastha-āśrama*. But one must continue fighting. For one who is not in a transcendental position, to take *sannyāsa* artificially is not a very great credit. If *sannyāsa* is not suitable, one may enter the *grhastha-āśrama* and fight *māyā* with great strength. But one should not give up the fighting and go away."

From out of his direct confrontation with the forces of illusion, Śrīla Prabhupāda presented his realizations. He had taken the case of *Madhu dvīpa*, refined it of its temporal aspects, and immortalized it into an instruction for persons everywhere.

Prabhupāda's job was to strengthen his disciples so they would not fall

Even if they took to the *gṛhastha-āśrama*, the crocodile of sense gratification was still very strong. And illicit sex was the “permanent disease” of the Western people. They were raised on it and addicted to it, and their society promooted it. To change this mentality would be very difficult. Therefore, in addition to writing, Prabhupāda would have to continue traveling and preaching to sustain his disciples and make them strong preachers.

As Prabhupāda had originally left his writing at the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana to preach in the West, so he could leave his writing retreat in Hawaii for preaching. In any case, he was prepared to continue writing wherever he went. All along he had planned to stay in Hawaii only for a month, not permanently. His disciples needed to see him for strength and inspiration, and as long as he had life and breath, this was his purpose.

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Prabhupāda wanted to first visit his Los Angeles center, now a large, thriving community of devotees. He would see their new temple room, with its marble arches and gallery of gorgeous transcendental paintings, and observe the opulent worship of the Deities Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhīśa. He would see the latest technological applications of Kṛṣṇa consciousness at Golden Avatara recording studios and at the FATE museum, which utilized multimedia dioramas to depict the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. He would sit in his garden and hear Kṛṣṇa book and walk on Venice Beach discussing scientific theories with Dr. Svarūpa Dāmodara. And, of course, he would increase the already swelling waves of book distribution. One day in the car he had said, “My books will be the lawbooks for human society for the next ten thousand years.”

Then in Detroit he would stay for a few days in the mansion he had purchased over a year ago, to see how the devotees were taking care of the fabulous gift Kṛṣṇa had given them and to advise them on how to use it as a showpiece of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For himself, Prabhupāda was not interested in living in a mansion, and constant traveling proved difficult regardless of where he stayed. The mansions, the opulence, the American money and expertise were all for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure.

From Detroit Prabhupāda would go to Toronto, where a year ago he had encouraged the devotees and the Indian community to purchase a big church in the city. Now in recent months they had actually purchased it, and they were awaiting Prabhupāda's arrival.

He would also travel to New Vrindaban, where for two years the devotees had been anxiously awaiting his return. They wanted him to sit on the

grand new *vyāsāsana* they had carved for him, to behold the Deities of Rādhā-Vrndāvanacandra, and to grace the palace they were building for him. And they wanted to see him again with his dear disciple Kīrtanānanda Swami. He would drink the milk of the New Vrindaban cows and teach about *varnāśrama-dharma*. He would praise the simple life and blast away at the follies of urbanized, industrialized civilization.

For the fourth of July, 1976, the bicentennial anniversary of the United States' independence, Śrīla Prabhupāda would be at the ISKCON temple in Washington, D.C., where he would hold *kīrtana* at the monuments before millions of people; and on July 6 in Washington he would observe the tenth anniversary of the formation of ISKCON.

Then he would go to New York for that city's first full-scale Ratha-yātrā. He would stay in the newly acquired ISKCON "skyscraper," the twelve-story building in mid-town Manhattan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had sometimes said his greatest fear was that his disciples would fight with one another, causing serious splits in his movement. Therefore he traveled, using his great influence to unite all elements. He had seen how even those to whom he had given great responsibility could again become victims of sense gratification. But he had also seen how his being with his disciples strengthened them.

He was declaring humanity's dependence on God, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and making a forceful revolution against the prevailing decadence of the day. Although America, in her two-hundredth anniversary, was abandoning her God consciousness, Śrīla Prabhupāda's ISKCON was fresh and vital, instilling pure God consciousness in America and everywhere. The cover of the latest issue of *Back to Godhead*, which Prabhupāda liked, depicted a devotee singing Hare Kṛṣṇa in front of a red, white, and blue bicentennial exhibit. The cover caption read, "Declaring Our Dependence on God."

Prabhupāda had complete confidence in the eventual victory of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Although now eighty years old, he was the leader, the strongest devotee. Wherever he traveled he brought life and strength, and so he continued.

New York City
July 9, 1976

Jayananda was driving the car. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Rāmeśvara Swami were also there. They had picked up Śrīla Prabhupāda and Hari-śauri at La Guardia Airport, and as they proceeded toward Manhattan,

Prabhupāda asked, "Things are going on here nicely?"

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa replied that everything had really just begun. "You will see that all of the work is just in progress," he said.

"Yes," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "manage nicely. Kṛṣṇa is giving us everything. There is no scarcity. If we simply sincerely work, Kṛṣṇa will give us intelligence—everything. By His mercy everything is available. That is Kṛṣṇa. He can give you anything."

As their car approached the colossal Brooklyn Bridge, Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired, "That is Brooklyn Bridge, I think? Sometimes I was coming here and sitting down near the bridge."

"Near the water?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. They were fascinated to hear of Śrīla Prabhupāda's early activities alone in New York. "You were sitting near the water?"

"Yes, that river," said Prabhupāda. "Because I was on that Bowery Street. It is not very far away. So I was coming, walking there, and sitting under that bridge and thinking, 'When I shall return to India?'" He laughed. He asked about other places, almost like inquiring about old friends—the Fulton Street subway station and Chambers Street.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa told Prabhupāda that the ISKCON center was not far from the Empire State Building and that he would be able to get a nice view of it from his room on the eleventh floor. "Our building," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "is right in the midst of the theater, restaurant, and entertainment section of the city."

"In New York," said Prabhupāda, "I feel a little at home, because first I came here. I was loitering on the street here and there. From 1965 September to July 1967, continually I stayed in New York."

"Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja gave a class this morning," said Rameśvara Swami. "He was explaining that we cannot understand the good fortune of this city, that you have come here."

"Yes, when I decided that I shall go to a foreign country," said Prabhupāda, "I never thought of going to London; I thought of coming here. Generally they go to London, but I thought, 'No, I shall go to New York.'"

"Very progressive," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa commented.

"I do not know," Prabhupāda laughed. "It is Kṛṣṇa's dictation. I could have gone. London was nearer. But I thought, 'No, I shall go to New York.' Sometimes I was even dreaming that I had gone to New York."

As they passed through various neighborhoods, Śrīla Prabhupāda recalled the old days. He mentioned Dr. Misra's yoga studio and his room

at 100 Seventy-second Street, where his tape recorder and typewriter had been stolen; the West End Superette, where he would buy fruit.

"Sometimes I think I was coming to this part," said Prabhupāda, looking out the window, "—aimlessly. Yes, sometimes walking on Second Avenue."

Acknowledging his senior disciple who was steadily and silently driving the car, Prabhupāda said, "Our Jayānanda was driving a taxi and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and one day he brought me five thousand dollars. It was given for the publishing of *Bhagavad-gītā*, but I think Macmillan took it."

"Then you put him in charge to sell all the *Teachings of Lord Chaitanya*," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "I remember."

"Didn't sell too many books, though," said Jayānanda. Prabhupāda laughed, while Jayānanda remained silent, intent on the task of driving through the city.

"I thought he was the best, most appropriate person to drive you," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"He was chanting and driving," said Prabhupāda. "Very good boy." As they weaved through Manhattan traffic, a taxi driver shouted at them.

"What does he say?" asked Prabhupāda.

"He said you have a nice car," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "That's good—they like the car."

Prabhupāda laughed. "Ask him, 'Why don't you come here? Why are you driving a taxi? Come join us.'"

"This car is the Ford company's version of a Cadillac," said Rāmeśvara. "They cannot understand, because we say we are not after material opulence for ourselves. They cannot understand why we drive in these cars."

"They think that we unnecessarily criticize," said Prabhupāda. "But we require everything. Just like a man—when he is alive, his decoration, his nice dress, everything is good. But if he is dead, then it is useless. Similarly, without spiritual consciousness we are dead, because the body is dead. Only because the spirit soul is there, therefore it is moving. The important point is the spirit soul. So if you are simply taking care of the body nicely, that means you are decorating the dead body. What is the value of it? Is it clear?"

"The body is important because the soul is there. So long the life is there, if you decorate the body everyone will appreciate. But if you decorate the dead body, everyone will say, 'What a fool he is!' Similarly, without spiritual knowledge, this dead civilization simply on the bodily concept of life, it is ludicrous. That we have to condemn. Take Kṛṣṇa consciousness,

then everything has value. Just like one—if there is zero, then it becomes ten. Add another zero and it becomes a hundred. But without that one, it is simply zero. It is only useless.”

“That ‘one’ is Kṛṣṇa,” said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

“And Kṛṣṇa’s representative,” added Rāmeśvara.

As they drove down Fifty-fifth Street, the devotees pointed out to Prabhupāda the ISKCON building, with the words Hare Krishna written in gold letters down the side. A large yellow banner showing a devotee of Lord Caitanya performing *sankīrtana* flew from the front of the building, and a stylish awning, emblazoned “Hare Krishna Center,” extended onto the sidewalk. At the sight of Prabhupāda’s car, hundreds of devotees at the entrance began to cheer and chant his name.

It was the largest gathering of ISKCON devotees since the Mayapur festival. Many had come from distant places to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and more than six hundred devotees were staying in the building. The *kīrtana* was tumultuous. Standing before the Deities of Rādhā-Govinda, Prabhupāda appeared pleased. A picture of Lord Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā was on the third altar, and Prabhupāda said he was anxious to see them on Ratha-yātra day.

As Prabhupāda sat on the large green *vyāsāsana*, he was at first too moved with emotion to speak. “First of all I must thank you all for bringing me in the new temple,” he began. “Because when I first came, my ambition was to start a temple here in New York, and I was seeking the opportunity.” He described some of his first, almost helpless, attempts to buy a twenty-five-by-one-hundred-foot space in Manhattan; but he had been unable to get any money.

“I had no place,” he said. “What to speak of a temple, I had no residential place even. So in that condition I was thinking of returning to India. Practically every week I was going to the shipping company. So it is a long history, that I came here with determination to start a temple in New York first. But at that time, ten years before, in 1965, it was not possible. But by the grace of Kṛṣṇa and by the grace of my Guru Mahārāja, you have got this place. So I must thank you very much for organizing this temple.”

Later in his lecture Prabhupāda stressed how *guru* and Kṛṣṇa were saving the conditioned souls from eternal suffering in the material world. “Don’t lose this opportunity,” he said. “Don’t be foolish, misled by so-called scientists, philosophers, or politicians. Take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And that is possible only by *guru kṛṣṇa kṛpā*. By the mercy of *guru* and

by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa you can achieve all success. This is the secret.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanāḥ**

So this *guru-pūjā* we are doing, it is not self-aggrandizement. It is real teaching. You sing daily, *guru-mukha-padma-vākya cittete kariyā aikya*.† I tell you frankly, whatever little success is there in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, I simply believed what was spoken by my Guru Mahārāja. You also continue that. Then every success will come. Thank you very much."

Śrīla Prabhupāda then toured the entire twelve-story building. He spoke little, but approved of almost everything he saw. His disciples seemed to be managing things properly on his behalf. His quarters were well appointed, with separate rooms for sitting and resting.

"So I shall again stay in New York?" he asked as he sat at his desk.

Ādi-keśava Swami, the temple president, said, "This is your triumphant return, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

"Yes," Prabhupāda replied, "that is my sentiment."

Devotees were eager to point out the features of the rooms, the view from the window, and the relative quiet.

"It's very peaceful for translating work," said Rāmeśvara Swami.

"Oh, yes," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "When my Guru Mahārāja left, I was alone. So he has sent so many *gurus* to take care of me. You are my Guru Mahārāja's representatives."

"We are *guru-dāsa*," a devotee said.

"So you are taking care," said Prabhupāda, "and I am very much obliged to you. I sometimes think of my childhood. I was very, very pet son of my father. I had admitted that in the book. My father was not very rich man, but still, whatever I wanted he would give me. He never chastised me, but full love. Then of course I got friends, and I was married. So by Kṛṣṇa's grace everyone loved me. And I came to this foreign country without any acquaintance. So Kṛṣṇa sent me many fathers to love me. In that way I am fortunate. At the last stage, if I live peacefully, that is the great mercy of Kṛṣṇa. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy everything is possible. So we shall stick to

* "Unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, all the imports of Vedic knowledge are automatically revealed." (*Śrīmad-Bhagavad Gītā* 6.23)

† "He who has given me the gift of transcendental vision is my lord, birth after birth."

Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Then everything is possible."

During Prabhupāda's ten-day stay in New York, the devotees remained in a triumphant, euphoric mood. For the Ratha-yātrā the devotees had permission from the City to have the parade down Fifth Avenue. Prabhupāda had said that New York was the most important city in the world and that a skyscraper would be a beacon of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the world. So now ISKCON had its skyscraper in Manhattan, its Ratha-yātrā parade down Fifth Avenue, and Prabhupāda's personal presence.

One morning Prabhupāda went to where the carts were being built, and Jayānanda and his men showed him the improved construction of the giant wheels. Jayānanda, who was terminally ill with leukemia, was absorbing himself in the service that had made him dear to Prabhupāda and to all the devotees: organizing Ratha-yātrā and overseeing the construction of the carts.

Prabhupāda would ride to Central Park to take his morning walks. Passing through familiar neighborhoods, he recalled the old days of 1965 and 1966. One morning Kīrtanānanda Swami rode with him in the car.

"My best memories are those early days," said Kīrtanānanda. "Especially the morning classes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you'd be sitting behind the desk. The sun would just be coming in, and you would talk for an hour."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "only Hayagrīva and you and..." Prabhupāda and Kīrtanānanda recalled some of the other early devotees: Umāpati, Carl Yeargens, Jim Greene, Rāya Rama, Satsvarūpa, Brahmānanda.

"At that time," said Prabhupāda, "Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja was taking one *capātt*."

"Nothing else?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"I would offer," said Prabhupāda, "but he would take one or two, that's all. Later on, one dozen. And that boy Stryadhīśa, he would take at least twenty *capātt*s. I would say, 'Stryadhīśa, can I offer you?' He would say, 'Yes.' I gave four. Again finished. Again four."

"Originally," said Kīrtanānanda, "we all ate from Prabhupāda's plate. There was one plate of *prasādam*. And Prabhupāda would just give a little for everybody, and everybody would be satisfied."

"I used to keep some *prasādam*," said Prabhupāda. "Anyone would come, I would give."

"After class," recalled Kīrtanānanda, "you always distributed some *prasādam*. After *kīrtana* and class."

“Yes,” said Prabhupāda. “I was clapping my hands. In the meeting, I used to collect not less than six dollars, not more than twenty dollars. Three times a week.”

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda’s triumph was that the early days of struggle were over, when he recalled them, he was immersed in a very special, sweet remembrance. He changed from one mood to another, and sometimes mixed them—the days of his helpless, utter dependence on Kṛṣṇa when no one else was present, and his present satisfaction, surrounded by hundreds of faithful disciples. While remembering the old days, he was now realizing his original goals for ISKCON New York, “the beacon-light for our world-wide propaganda.”

In the late afternoon as the sun was setting, Śrīla Prabhupāda liked to sit on the roof of his skyscraper, and his disciples would sit with him. Although the building was in Midtown, being situated on the West Side afforded it a feeling of distance from the intensity of mid-Manhattan. Prabhupāda would look out at the Manhattan skyline, and a breeze from the Hudson would ease the July heat.

One evening, some of the devotees described to Śrīla Prabhupāda some of the abominable activities going on in the city. They told him of prostitution and pornography, of acts of rampant criminal violence, and of the strange fetishes and fads of the flesh-eaters, including the eating of human fetuses.

“This means,” said Prabhupāda, “that we are actually preaching to animals.”

One night on the roof, Rāmeśvara Swami asked Śrīla Prabhupāda to reveal his plan for conquering the world with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda was silent. Finally he said, “No. Because if I tell you my plans, then they may be spoiled.” He had a plan, he said, but they were not ready for it.

The Ratha-yātrā procession, with its three fifty-foot-tall carts, began at Grand Army Plaza on Fifth Avenue and proceeded downtown. Young men, girls in *sāris*, Indians, New Yorkers—hundreds—tugged at the ropes, pulling the gigantic chariots. With silken towers billowing yellow, green, red, and blue in the wind, slowly and majestically, the carts sailed south. The parade was complete with beautiful weather, hundreds of chanting and dancing devotees, and thousands of onlookers. And the route was some

fifty blocks down Fifth Avenue, "the most important street in the world," to Washington Square Park.

At Thirty-fourth Street Prabhupāda joined the procession. As he came forward to board the chariot of Subhadrā, the devotees converged around him, amazing the policemen and other onlookers with their spontaneous adoration of Kṛṣṇa's representative. Although the inner meaning of Ratha-yātrā is the gopīs' desire for Kṛṣṇa to return to Vṛndāvana, these devotees were more absorbed in Śrīla Prabhupāda's return to New York.

It was a gorgeous, appropriate climax to Prabhupāda's ten years of preaching in New York City. When he had first come he had had no money, no place of his own to live, and no place for people to congregate and hear about Kṛṣṇa. Now he was riding in splendor down Fifth Avenue at the Ratha-yātrā festival, and his Rādhā-Govinda Deities had a skyscraper. In 1965 he had been alone on the street, but now he was accompanied by six hundred disciples, loudly singing the holy names and benefiting millions of conditioned souls.

In front of Subhadrā's cart walked Jayānanda, holding the steering tongue, keeping the cart on course. As Prabhupāda sat comfortably on the cart he fondly glanced at Jayānanda from time to time. Jayānanda, steering with his left hand, would hold his right hand upraised, cheering Prabhupāda's Ratha-yātrā and rallying the others to pull the ropes and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

When the procession arrived, Washington Square Park was crowded with people. A temporary stage had been erected, and Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Deities took their places. Kīrtanānanda Swamī introduced Prabhupāda before the crowd, and Prabhupāda stood up to speak.

Beginning by explaining the significance of Ratha-yātrā, Śrīla Prabhupāda told the story of how the Jagannātha deities were carved at the request of the king of Orissa over two thousand years ago. When the king had disturbed the sculptor before the deities were completed, the sculptor had left. "But the king decided, 'I shall worship this unfinished deity, never mind.'

"So the devotee is offering," Prabhupāda continued, "and Kṛṣṇa accepts... if it is offered with love and affection. He says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *patram puṣpam phalam toyam/ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati*. Kṛṣṇa says anyone who offers Him a little flower, a little water, a little fruit with love and affection, I eat them, I accept them.

"That means that even the poorest man in the world can worship God. There is no hindrance—*ahaitukī apratihatā*—devotional service cannot

be checked by any material condition. There is no restriction of caste or creed or country, nation. Anyone can worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, according to his means.

"And our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is a propagation to teach people how to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is our mission, because without relationship with God, without reviving our eternal affinity with God, we cannot be happy."

All living entities, Prabhupāda explained, are children of the supreme father, Kṛṣṇa, or God. But only in the human form of life can one understand his relationship with God. If one misuses his life and doesn't understand his duty to Kṛṣṇa, then his life is spoiled.

"So please do not take this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement as any sectarian movement. It is the science of God. Try to understand the science of God. Either you accept it directly, or you try to understand through philosophy and science. We have got so many books. Kindly take advantage of this movement, why we are distributing so many literatures. Soberly and with calm head, try to understand this movement. This is our only mission. Thank you very much."

As Śrīla Prabhupāda left to return to the temple, *prasādam* distribution began and the dramatic actors prepared to go onstage with their rendition of "Kali and His Consort, Sin."

In the evening the parade and festival received good coverage on all major TV stations, and the next morning, pictures and articles appeared in the newspapers. Prabhupāda particularly liked the *New York Daily News* centerspread, where several photos bore a large caption: "Fifth Avenue, Where East Meets West."

"Send this cutting to many places," Prabhupāda said. "Send it to Indira Gandhi. This title is very nice. This is the point. 'East meets West.' As I always say, the lame man meets the blind man. Together they do wonderful, and apart they cannot do anything. *He* is lame, and *he* is blind. But if they join together—Indian culture and American money—they will save the whole world."

Śrīla Prabhupāda heard from the *New York Times* article, which stressed how the parade included hundreds of Indians "who were pleased to see they could keep faith even in New York City." The article quoted "an Indian immigrant" as saying, "We love New York City, America. It's the most beautiful place in the world. No other country will give such freedom for our own ceremony."

"That's a fact," Prabhupāda said. "That I always say. The *Times* first

published about my activities when I was in Tompkins Square Park."

At the festival site, *prasādam* had been served to seven thousand people. And even when the devotees had walked back uptown with the carts late at night, hundreds of people had followed and chanted. The devotees were already talking about how to improve the festival for next year. They could have a press box, and Prabhupāda suggested they rent a small building downtown and call it Gundīca.* Lord Jagannātha could stay there for one week. Then the devotees should have another procession and festival with Lord Jagannātha returning to the temple on Fifty-fifth Street.

"Last night," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, "all night we were cleaning up the grounds at the park. So one woman who lives next to the park said, 'In all my years of living here I've never seen such a wonderful festival held.' And on CBS television, the official who's in charge of the park said, 'We are very proud to be able to say that this park was founded hundreds of years ago when America was religious and that spiritual life is still present in Washington Square Park.'"

"So why not ask the mayor to construct a temple there?" said Śrīla Prabhupāda. The devotees all laughed. But Prabhupāda thought such things were certainly possible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's health was worsening, as often happened when he traveled extensively. Particularly in New York his health began to suffer. His itinerary was to continue on to London, Paris, Tehran, Bombay, and then to Hyderabad, where he would conduct the opening ceremony of a new ISKCON temple. Senior devotees entreated him to rest awhile before going to England and India. He had spent a very pleasant day at the ISKCON farm in Pennsylvania, and the devotees suggested he go there for two or three months to rest, recover his health, and write. Every day they would beg him to please stay. When he heard that the G.B.C. members in New York had unanimously recommended he not immediately travel, he said, "All right. I will not travel."

But he could not be bound by the G.B.C., however—only by Kṛṣṇa. He already had his plane tickets, and he remained set on traveling.

On the morning of Prabhupāda's departure, a few devotees came to his room to make a last attempt, begging him not to travel. He said nothing,

* The temple in Orissa, India, where Lord Jagannātha traditionally stays each year during His Ratha-yātrā pastimes.

though he was obviously set on leaving. His servants were packing his bags and everything was ready to go. Nevertheless, even as he left his room and got on the elevator, a few men followed, still suggesting he not go.

"Prabhupāda, please reconsider," said Rāmeśvara Swami. Śrīla Prabhupāda had remained jolly so far, despite his physical weakness, and despite his disciples' pleading. But now his face changed.

"Don't travel," one devotee said. And another added, "Just stay. Sit down and rest."

Prabhupāda turned, and his eyes were very deep. More than ever he seemed not of this material world. "I want the benediction to go on fighting for Kṛṣṇa," he said, "just like Arjuna."

Everyone remained silent, and the important instruction burned into their memories. The elevator opened on the main floor and hundreds of waiting devotees chanted and cheered as Śrīla Prabhupāda walked to his car.

On the way to the airport the devotees again began talking about how degraded Kali-yuga was. "But you have to go on preaching," Prabhupāda advised them. "You have to go and try to save these people."

As Śrīla Prabhupāda left America, the devotees knew he would remain with them as long as they followed his instructions. Besides, even if he was leaving them, he would return. He was coming from India to New York, then going back to India, then coming to the West. He was always traveling between East and West, tugging the two cultures together, the lame man and the blind. Like Arjuna he was fighting, and like Nārada Muni he was always traveling, glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. He would never stop, and those who sincerely followed would be with him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and Fight

Bombay

January 9, 1977

Srīla Prabhupāda started his morning walk before dawn. He and the devotees knew their way well through Hare Krishna Land to the public road, and once off the property, they turned left then right and began walking down the block leading to the beach. The sky began to lighten. At first they could not visibly distinguish land from sea from sky. But gradually subtle nuances of color revealed the horizon, and they could see the vast plain of the Arabian Sea stretching to meet the even greater sea of sky, where last stars twinkled and faded. As Prabhupāda and his small group walked along the broad beach, they were flanked on their left by a line of leaning palms and on their right by a rumbling surf.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wore a gray woolen *cādar* around his shoulders, a saffron silk *kurtā* and *dhottī*, and peach-colored canvas shoes. He used a cane, leaning not heavily on it, but lightly. With each brisk step he would point the cane ahead, poking it into the sand and lifting it again, rhythmically marking the pace. He walked erectly and held his head high.

A long line of Bombayites, many of them wealthy Juhu residents on their morning stroll, appeared, and a few coconut-*wālās* set up their carts, cutting off the tops of choice coconuts in anticipation of their first customers. Śrīla Prabhupāda liked to walk at this time of morning, and weather permitting, he would do so no matter where he was in the world. Juhu Beach, however, was one of his favorite places to walk.

Along the way, he and his disciples were joined by Dr. Patel, in white shirt and pants, and several of his friends, mostly doctors and lawyers. Śrīla Prabhupāda had been silent, but now he began to speak.

"How everything is nice," Śrīla Prabhupāda commented, gesturing toward the beach before him. "See the sky, how clear and how nice by Kṛṣṇa. *Pūrnam idam*." With his cane he indicated the tall, graceful palm trees. "The tree is called *vṛkṣa*," he said. "The *vṛkṣa-yoni*, or birth as a tree, is condemned. By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement, however, the *vṛkṣas* are also so nicely set up, it becomes beautiful."

"They are all representatives of Kṛṣṇa," said Dr. Patel. "This is perfect."

"*Pūrnam*," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, quoting *Īsopaniṣad*. "*Pūrnam idam, pūrnam adah*." Just as the rising sun illumines everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda discoursed, speaking against the atheistic notion that the complex material creation has no creator. "God's creation," said Prabhupāda, "is perfect and complete because it comes from Him who is *pūrnam*, perfect and complete. *Anṇantara-stha paramānu chayāntara-stham/ govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*. *Paramānu* means smaller than the atom. Six *paramānus* make one *anu*. That is atomic dimension—you combine six *paramānus*. So in that *paramānu* also the Lord is there."

"He made it," said Dr. Patel, "and then He entered into it. That is what the *Veda* says."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "the *Paramātmā* is there. The whole human life is meant for understanding all this and glorifying the Lord. And they are wasting their lives by imitating the hog."

Prabhupāda again fell silent, except for softly uttering the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Now the beach was light, and many people, out on their morning walks or runs, greeted Śrīla Prabhupāda as they passed. The greetings were always words of respect, or at least "Good morning," and Śrīla Prabhupāda's response was usually "Hare Kṛṣṇa."

Suddenly Prabhupāda again began to speak: "There's a very big conspiracy against us."

"By the church?" guessed Dr. Patel.

"Not by the church," said Prabhupāda.

"By the society?"

Prabhupāda uttered a thoughtful "Hmmm," then added, "Now they're determined to cut down this movement." He didn't give any details, and neither Dr. Patel nor the others could fully draw out what was on his mind. Whatever it was, said Dr. Patel, no conspiracy against Kṛṣṇa consciousness could take place in India.

"I wanted to start this movement in India," Prabhupāda replied. "I

requested so many friends, 'Give me just one son.' But nobody agreed. They said, 'Swamiji, what will be the benefit by this if I make my son a Vaiṣṇava or a *brāhmaṇa*?' They do not give much importance to the movement. They are planning how to stop this movement in so many ways."

Always a faithful Indophile, Dr. Patel replied, "The Americans are like that, always making propaganda."

"There is good and bad in every place," said Prabhupāda. "Kṛṣṇa says, *manusyānām sahasreṣu*. Out of thousands of persons hardly anyone is interested in perfecting his life. This is Kali-yuga."

They walked on, and Śrīla Prabhupāda said no more about it, speaking instead of materialistic household life, in which the chief pleasure is sex. Beyond this abominable sex pleasure, he said, was the full satisfaction of spiritual life.

Prabhupāda walked for half an hour and then turned around and began walking back, wanting to return to the temple by seven, just in time to greet the Deities. Some of the others were flagging from the brisk pace, but Śrīla Prabhupāda strode on, his golden-hued face triumphant in self-realization.

Prabhupāda began talking about the importance of *sat-sanga*, association with devotees, and Dr. Patel quipped, "Instead of doing *sat-sanga*, people go to Kumbha-melā!" He laughed, as if it were a good joke.

But Prabhupāda corrected him. "No," he said, "Kumbha-melā is *sat-sanga*. If you go to Kumbha-melā to find a man of knowledge, then your Kumbha-melā is right. Otherwise, *yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicit, sa eva go-khara*. If one thinks that this *salila*, the water, that just to take bath in the water is Kumbha-melā, then he's a *go-khara*, a cow or an ass. But if he thinks, 'Now there is an assembly of so many saintly persons, let me take advantage of their knowledge,' then he is intelligent."

Ever since Śrīla Prabhupāda had arrived in Bombay, he had been questioned about the upcoming Kumbha-melā at Allahabad. The Magh-melā occurred every year, but according to astrological calculations, a more auspicious occasion came every twelfth year: Kumbha-melā. And every twelfth Kumbha-melā (an event that occurred only once in 144 years) was especially auspicious. This year, 1977, was to be such a Melā, and the government was predicting an attendance of twelve million at the confluence of the holy rivers near Allahabad. Śrīla Prabhupāda had said he would go.

"So, sir," said Dr. Patel, "you are going by train to Kumbha-melā?" Śrīla Prabhupāda replied that he liked the train, but Dr. Patel said

it was not good for health and that it would be a very long ordeal. He also warned Prabhupāda that Allahabad would be very cold. And if Prabhupāda wanted to leave the Mela early, he would find it very difficult because of the crowds. "I'll get one of my friends to get me some water from Allahabad on that day," laughed Dr. Patel. "I'll take my bath here." Dr. Patel's friends also mentioned the difficulties of extreme weather and crowds at Allahabad during the Mela. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, was not swayed. He was well acquainted with Allahabad, having lived there with his family from 1923 to 1936.

"In 1925," said Prabhupāda, "I went to the Mela. I remember, I was touching the water, and it was so pinching that it was cutting your body. But as soon as you actually get a dip—one . . . two . . . three—then you immediately come out, and it is all right."

Prabhupāda mentioned the 1928 Mela, when he was carrying his young child. "I was in the midst of the crowd," he recalled. "It was so big that I was afraid that if there was any rush this child may be finished. But, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, nothing happened."

"What is the reason for the Mela?" asked Prabhupāda's servant, Hari-śauri. "Is it something about some drops of nectar from the Mohini-mūrti?"

"It is actually a religious conference," Prabhupāda replied. "All the different groups gather in that holy place, and they propagate their philosophy there. India is a country of religion. They know spiritual life is more important than this material life—that is India. Now they are diverting their attention to the material. Otherwise, the whole of India is for spiritual life."

About five minutes before seven, Śrīla Prabhupāda left the beach and walked back to Hare Krishna Land. As he approached, he saw the massive two-story towers of the ISKCON hotel and the even taller and grander temple domes. The buildings, however, were unfinished. The temple domes had to be covered with marble, and all the buildings needed numerous finishing touches. Prabhupāda was anxiously anticipating the opening, but Surabhi Mahārāja spoke of delays. The opening date, therefore, remained indefinite.

Delays had been routine ever since Prabhupāda had first tried to purchase the Juhu land from Mr. N. in 1971, and obstacles had plagued all his attempts to build. Now the triumph of installing the Deities of Rādhā-Rasavihār in one of the most gorgeous temples in India was near. Rādhā-Rasavihār were still being worshiped in the temporary shelter the devotees

had erected in 1971, but as Prabhupāda approached, he could see the magnificent temple structure looming behind that humble shed, proclaiming that soon Rāsavihārī would move into His palace. Kṛṣṇa was blessing the faithful work of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples in Bombay. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda was always traveling, pushing his movement ahead on all fronts, he would regularly return to Bombay. He, more clearly than his disciples, could see when the workers were delaying or even cheating. This time, as before, he would stay for a while, give advice, and then move on.

On returning to the ISKCON property, Śrīla Prabhupāda came before the Deities and beheld once again the charming beauty that made him sometimes indicate that of all Deities, these were the dearest to him. His promise to Rādhā-Rāsavihārī that he would build Them a beautiful temple was soon to become a living reality, but he sometimes expressed doubt as to whether he would live to see it. He was now eighty-one and was bothered by certain persistent illnesses.

Of course, the warnings of death were nothing new to Śrīla Prabhupāda, as he had had serious bouts with illness from the beginning of his preaching in the West in 1965. Yet despite his frequent remarks about retiring, his disciples found it difficult to imagine. Yes, they should by all means complete the work as soon as possible and open the Bombay temple, and yes, they should assure Prabhupāda that he could retire and eventually complete his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But of course, Kṛṣṇa would allow him to remain with them and see the completion of at least these two projects.

Each month, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's G.B.C. men stayed with him to serve as his secretary and to receive direct training and personal association. The secretary for January 1977 was Rāmeśvara Swami. Prabhupāda was genuinely pleased and enlivened when, early in the morning, Rāmeśvara entered his room, having flown straight from Los Angeles to Bombay. Prabhupāda considered Rāmeśvara an expert ISKCON manager, especially in printing and distributing Kṛṣṇa conscious literature, which was Prabhupāda's priority in preaching.

Rāmeśvara Swami inquired as a humble servant before his spiritual master. "Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said, "you look well. Are you feeling well?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed. "At the present moment I am feeling well, because you are here."

Within moments they were discussing ISKCON preaching and management, and Prabhupāda advised Rāmeśvara that the best policy was to use money for printing more books. As soon as money accumulated, Prabhupāda warned, it would be taxed and would cause headaches. Better to immediately spend it for printing books.

"Print books and sell and spend," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Follow this policy and distribute these books. That is our main preaching. Somehow or other we must take our books door to door and distribute. Then our preaching is successful. Anyone who will read will get some benefit, that is sure. Because no other such literature is available throughout the whole world. It is a new revolution to the people in general."

When Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for news of ISKCON's activities in the West, Rāmeśvara gave the latest details of how the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in America was being attacked in the courts and press as a psychologically dangerous, brainwashing cult. Śrīla Prabhupāda was already aware of this; it was, in fact, the "conspiracy" he had referred to on his morning walk. An anticult movement was now aggressively active and lumping the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in with other new movements. Śrīla Prabhupāda was well aware of the "deprogrammers'" kidnapping of devotees and intensively coercing them, and he had shown that he was not intimidated by the attack. He assured the devotees that Kṛṣṇa would protect them and that the outcome would ultimately be in their favor.

The most significant battle, one that had concerned Śrīla Prabhupāda for several months, was a legal case in New York where the temple president, Ādi-keśava Swami, was being charged with employing mind control to keep the devotees in the temple. The parents of two adult devotees had pressed charges after hired deprogrammers had failed to break the two devotees' determination for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In a spirit of anticult crusade, an assistant attorney general was prosecuting, using all legal and governmental facilities at his disposal. Although civil libertarians were outraged and assured the devotees that the opposition could never win, the implications of the case were fearful nevertheless. The case challenged the very right of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to exist as a bona fide religion and challenged the right of adult devotees to remain in the movement against the wishes of their parents. Also at issue was whether members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement were members by their own choosing or were being kept in the movement by psychological manipulation, "brainwashing." When Śrīla Prabhupāda had first heard of this case, his reply

in a letter from Vrndavana had been like a clarion call to battle against the forces of illusion

Regarding the point about whether our movement is bona fide, you can use the following arguments Bhagavad gita has got so many editions Our books are older than the Bible. In India there are millions of Kṛṣṇa temples Let the judges and juries read our books and take the opinion of learned scholars and professors Regarding the second point about the parents' jurisdiction over their children, here are some suggestions Do the parents like that their children become hippies? Why don't they stop it? Do the parents like their children to become involved in prostitution and intoxication? Why don't they stop this?

They are now feeling the weight of this movement Formerly they thought, "These people come and go," but now they see we are staying Now we have set fire. It will go on It cannot be stopped You can bring big, big fire brigades but the fire will act The brain wash books are already there. Even if they stop externally, internally it will go on Our first class campaign is book distribution Go house to house The real fighting is now Kṛṣṇa will give you all protection So, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and fight

Sitting with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Bombay, Rāmeśvara Swamī informed him that a nationwide committee of professors and theologians had come to the defense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the New York case and that many lawyers and psychologists were sympathetic

"It is so much mercy from Kṛṣṇa," said Śrīla Prabhupāda "Kṛṣṇa wanted all these things to happen Kṛṣṇa Himself became important when He killed so many demons, not simply by lying down in the lap of mother Yaśoda When He was on the lap of mother Yaśoda, from that day He began to kill Therefore Kṛṣṇa established that He was the Supreme Personality of Godhead So even Kṛṣṇa was not exempted, what to speak of us Prahāda Mahārāja was not exempted As soon as you speak of God, this opposition will come. Jesus Christ was crucified They are so kind they have not crucified me or my men But you have to expect all these things Nityānanda Prabhu was personally injured Haridāsa Ṭhākura was beaten in twenty two bazaars This task is like that"

"They are getting everyone in America to ask the question, 'What is Hare Kṛṣṇa?'" said Rāmeśvara

"That is our gain," said Śrīla Prabhupāda "They are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa"

"We still have to work very hard to defeat them," Rāmeśvara added.

"Oh, yes," said Prabhupāda. "That is necessary. You don't sleep. Never did Kṛṣṇa say to Arjuna, 'I am your friend. I am God. You sleep here. I'll do everything.' No! You must fight! That is wanted. Kṛṣṇa said, 'You fight, and remember Me. Then I'll do everything.' This is an opportunity of remembering Kṛṣṇa always."

Prabhupāda explained that the greatest shock for the materialists was that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement strongly opposed illicit sex, meat-eating, and intoxication. To them, for a person to give up these things was so shocking that they could not accept it was happening because of a genuine spiritual experience. Referring to a previous case, Prabhupāda said, "In Germany they also accused that the old man is sitting in Los Angeles, and he has engaged all these boys in collecting money for him. They are thinking that way, that I have some mind control power, and I have engaged these men—they are getting the money and I am enjoying."

Śrīla Prabhupāda recalled how, as early as 1969, when his temple in Los Angeles had purchased a few ears and the number of devotees had begun increasing, the neighbors had become envious. Prabhupāda said that he had invited them to also come and live in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness community, but that their reply had always been no. Prabhupāda said that the more the opposition created turmoil, the more Kṛṣṇa consciousness would become famous. He also reasoned that people were reacting to his very strong preaching.

"I condemn everyone," he said, "that they are all dogs and hogs. And the United Nations I called a pack of barking dogs. It's a fact. And in Chicago I said, 'All women, you cannot have freedom.' So I became a subject of great criticism."

Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded his meeting with Rāmeśvara by saying that the devotees should be very alert and intelligently defend the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement; but they should also understand that a higher principle was operating. This opposition indicated the genuineness of ISKCON. Even Kṛṣṇa Himself was sometimes the center of calamitous activities, such as when He fought with Kālīya and other enemies or when, as an infant, He fell into the Yamunā river.

"This is the beauty of Vṛndāvana," said Prabhupāda. "When Kṛṣṇa entered the Yamunā to fight with Kālīya it was not at all good news for mother Yaśoda, Nanda, the friends and family. Not at all. Their life was lost. But still Kṛṣṇa was the center. This is Vṛndāvana. In everything Kṛṣṇa is in the center. So our situation is just like that. They are making bad

propaganda against Kṛṣṇa—this is the opposition—but I am happy that Kṛṣṇa is the center. That's all. This is the beauty of this movement. Although we are put into some difficulty, yet the center is Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to travel with a group of his disciples by train to Allahabad. But when a devotee went to buy tickets, he discovered that all seats had long been purchased, there was no chance of making reservations for Allahabad so close to Kumbha mela. One of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Bombay friends, however, a Mr. Gupta, held a high position with the Central Railway of India and, at Prabhupāda's request, arranged for a special, private car on a train to Allahabad, exclusively for Prabhupāda and his disciples.

Early on the morning of January 11 Śrīla Prabhupāda embarked on the twenty-four hour plus train ride from Bombay to Allahabad. He was sharing his first class compartment with Rāmesvara Swamī, Jagadīśa, and Hari śaurī, and even as the train pulled out of the station, Prabhupāda was preaching. Rāmesvara mentioned a radio show he had recently been on in California, where a Lutheran minister had said Kṛṣṇa was a sex symbol because He had so many wives and *gopīs*.

"Even taking it that Kṛṣṇa is after sex," said Prabhupāda, "then if sex is bad, why are they after sex?"

"He says that sex is not for God," Rāmesvara replied. Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting on one side of the compartment, and his disciples sat facing him. The loud rattling of the train cars on the rails made conversation sometimes difficult.

"If sex is not there in God," said Prabhupāda, "then how has it come? God created everything. So God did not create sex?" Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that sex exists both in the material world and in the spiritual, material sex enjoyment being a perversion of the original, pure sex that exists in the Supreme. Kṛṣṇa's sexual enjoyment, therefore, is not at all like material sex, it is the exact opposite, in fact, inasmuch as the reality is the opposite of its reflection.

"You do not understand how to face the opposing party," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was in an animated, argumentative mood, enthusiastic to show his disciples how to defeat the opposition. He had sometimes described his own spiritual master as *simha* ("lion") *guru*, and they now saw him in a similar fighting spirit. "The more opposition there will be," he said, "the more we have to defend."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," Rāmeśvara asked, "should we be thinking in our minds that one day the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will have to manage the cities and the nations of the world?"

"Oh, yes," Prabhupāda replied.

Rāmeśvara asked how the devotees could accomplish such a huge, ambitious project. The management would be simplified, Prabhupāda explained, since the citizens would live a pure, natural life. Thus the burdensome, sinful aspects of godless government would become unnecessary, and so many complex problems would be solved. He gave the example of self-sufficient agrarian communities where men earn their livelihood locally. But only by education and by experiencing the higher taste of Kṛṣṇa conscious pleasure, he said, could the masses become satisfied with simple living.

Rāmeśvara asked if America would become Kṛṣṇa conscious by a minority of Kṛṣṇa conscious persons becoming powerful in government, while the masses remained as *karmīs*.

"No," Prabhupāda replied, "You can introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness in such a way that they will become devotees. Suppose in big, big factories we shall introduce this *prasādam* distribution and chanting. They will immediately become devotees. Their hearts will be cleansed; *ceto-darpana-mārjanam*."

"But will it be like Russia," pursued Rāmeśvara, "where there is only a small group of people who are in control?"

"No, it is not like that. The quality of the people will be changed."

"So that means only when the whole mass of population becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious," Rāmeśvara suggested, "then there will be Kṛṣṇa conscious government..."

"No," Prabhupāda corrected, "You can have government when you are in minority. But the mass of people, on account of this quality, they have to see the example."

In one sense these were not immediate concerns—how the devotees would manage the whole world—since the devotees' political influence was at present insignificant. But by answering these questions, Prabhupāda was establishing future goals and tactics for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Rāmeśvara Swami, as both a practical manager and a visionary, wanted to know exactly how Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the Kṛṣṇa conscious world of the future.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had the answers, but he indicated that social or political management would be done not by any new formalities but by

pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, by changing the hearts of the people through chanting, hearing, studying scripture—and *then* organizing things on the basic principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness

As the train passed beyond the heavily populated Bombay area and entered the countryside, Śrīla Prabhupāda looked out the window, appreciating the scenery “We have come to the open field,” he said “How it is nice And as long as we were passing through the congested areas—hellish, simply hellish Now here is open space, how it is nice”

“Entering into a city is so imposing on your consciousness,” said Hari śaurī

“Yes,” Prabhupāda said, “at that point it is simply rubbish All papers thrown here and there, and people living in hellish conditions Now see here how it is open and pleasing So organize these farm projects”

When Rāmesvara pointed out that beginning a farm community required a great deal of capital, Prabhupāda simply replied that the devotees should show the example and that others would automatically follow the successful pattern Rāmesvara mentioned that in America, although the ISKCON temple presidents were eager to get as many people to join as possible, they found that most people were unable to come up to the required standard

“Therefore farm,” Prabhupāda said

“They have to be encouraged to have a little bit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in their own home,” Rāmesvara suggested, “—make their home a temple.”

Prabhupāda disagreed “No Let them go to the farm, New Vrindaban” If the people were disinclined to austerity, he said, then let them come to the farm with their wife and children and live comfortably in their own house. And on the farms they would find plenty of employment More and more, Prabhupāda said, people would become jobless and would be obliged to take shelter of a Kṛṣṇa conscious farm community

“So we can expect,” said Hari śaurī, “that material conditions are going to become very much worse than at present?”

“They may come or not,” said Prabhupāda “We don’t care. Let us establish an ideal society”

Although Prabhupāda had left Bombay without taking breakfast, he continued speaking for four hours and then asked Hari-śaurī to serve lunch The other devotees left the compartment

Hari-śaurī carried all Prabhupāda’s personal effects in two small shoulder bags, one with three changes of clothing, the other with Prabhupāda’s plate, bowl, spoon, *tiffin tilaka*, and mirror With just these two bags

Prabhupāda was traveling all over the world. Although he was the head of a wealthy, international movement, he kept nothing for himself and traveled light. Whatever donations he collected, whatever profits came from the sale of his books, whatever properties he owned—everything was in the name of ISKCON. And yet when it came time to eat in the middle of that dusty train ride, his servant was able to produce silver bowls and a tray and an elegant vegetarian feast. Although Prabhupāda kept nothing for himself, by Kṛṣṇa's arrangement he was well provided for.

Śrīla Prabhupāda sat cross-legged on the train seat and pointed to what he wanted from the stainless steel *tiffin* compartments his servant placed before him. There were *sobjts*, *purts*, fruits, and sweets. After Śrīla Prabhupāda chose what he wanted and began to eat, he insisted that Hari-śauri also take *prasādam*. When they finished, Hari-śauri distributed the remnants of Prabhupāda's meal to the other devotees, and Prabhupāda lay down to rest.

In the afternoon, more devotees gathered in Prabhupāda's small compartment, and he continued preaching, mostly in reply to points Rāmeśvara Swami raised.

"In regard to brainwashing," said Rāmeśvara, "they claim that our life-style tends to take the devotee and isolate him from the world."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "we hate to mix with you. No gentleman tries to mix with loafers. Crows will not like to live with the ducks and white swans, and white swans will not like to live with the crows. That is natural division. Birds of the same feather flock together."

Rāmeśvara: "They have a list of five or six conditions, and they say if all these conditions are present, then it is a suitable atmosphere for brainwashing. They say we are imposing those conditions on our members."

Prabhupāda: "Yes. We are brainwashing from bad to good. That is our business. We are washing the brain from all rascaldom. Your brain is filled up with all rubbish things—meat-eating, illicit sex, gambling. So we are washing them. *Ceto-darpana mārjanam*. *Sṁvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya śravaṇa kīrtanāḥ hṛdy antah-stho hy abhadrāṇi*. *Abhadrāṇi* means 'bad things.' So the bad things should be washed. Don't you cleanse your home? Don't you cleanse your room? Is that brainwashing? So if you wash your room very clean, who blames you? But you are so rascal that you charge us, 'Why are you washing away this garbage?' We are washing out the garbage, and you are protesting. This is your intelligence. But intelligent men wash away the garbage. That is the law of civilization, to cleanse. That we are doing.

"According to Vedic civilization you are actually untouchable. Now we have come to touch you. Therefore wash—first you must wash. According to Indian civilization the dog is untouchable, but he is your best friend. So you are untouchable. Therefore, we have to wash your brain. Unless your brain is washed, you cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. Man is known by his company. You sleep with dog, you eat with dog, your best friend is dog, so what you are? You must be washed, scrubbed."

Rāmeśvara: "But this is their argument, that the standard in America is that you become learned in different fields—science, music, art, and literature. This standard of culture and education is coming from the idea of the Renaissance in Europe. But in our Hare Kṛṣṇa movement we are isolating ourselves from these things and simply reading one set of literature—Kṛṣṇa."

Prabhupāda: "This other is not culture. As soon as you change, that means it is not culture. It is *mano-dharma*, mental concoction. Yes, we want to stop your nonsense. That is our mission. Those who are intelligent, they have taken. And you also take."

Rāmeśvara raised the objection that Kṛṣṇa conscious children are not prepared to go to public schools and universities, and Śrīla Prabhupāda replied that they were being saved.

"But what if they want to change later in their life?" asked Rāmeśvara.

"They have become Kṛṣṇa conscious from the very beginning," Prabhupāda replied. "That is the perfection of life. They are perfect from the very beginning of their life. And you are going to school in the college, but you are becoming most uncivilized—like cats and dogs, becoming naked and having sex on the street. So what is the value of that education? Stop all these colleges and universities. As soon as they are stopped, it is better for human beings."

Rāmeśvara: "They say that if we claim our members are gentlemen, they why is it that they go to the airport and bother so many people?"

Prabhupāda: "They are not bothering. They are educating. When a thief is advised, 'Kindly do not become a thief,' he takes it as botheration. But it is good advice."

Rāmeśvara: "They say it is invasion of privacy. Every man has the right to think the way he wants."

Prabhupāda: "Yes. Therefore I have got the right to think like this and sell books."

Rāmeśvara: "So if I do not want to hear your philosophy, why do you

Prabhupāda: "It is not imposing. It is good philosophy. We are canvassing: 'Take it. You will be benefited.' And they are being benefited. Those who are reading, they are being benefited. And why are you advertising—big, big signboards: 'Please come and purchase'? Hmm? Why are you imposing your so-called goodness on us? Why you are doing?"

Back and forth the battle went, hour after hour, Rāmeśvara unleashing all the arguments against the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and Śrīla Prabhupāda defeating them. Prabhupāda called the arguments "childish" and "foolish," and he strongly criticized the materialistic demeanor from which they sprang. By *śāstra* and logic he proved that the nondevotee has no good qualities and is less than an animal because of his lack of God consciousness. Such a person, he said, was in no position to criticize, and such criticisms only showed ignorance of the real purpose of human life.

The train stopped in Manmad, Jalgaon, and Khandwa, as well as other small towns and junctions, and for Prabhupāda and his disciples the day passed quickly in discussion. Prabhupāda was absorbed in defending the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. He relished fighting on behalf of Lord Caitanya. He was speaking, of course, mainly for the benefit of his disciples, but beyond that, he was expressing his compassion for all beings and his dedication to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

"They are spending so much for military strength," Prabhupada continued. "They are not performing *yajña*, so how will there be rainfall? There will be warfare, devastation. It is a most rubbish civilization. They are misleading everyone—soul killing. It is the blind leading the blind. Even when there is difficulty, we have to do this as Kṛṣṇa's business. Let the dogs bark on. We don't care. If we remain sincere to Kṛṣṇa, that is our victory. The external result is not so important. We have to act according to the direction of Kṛṣṇa.

"Of course, we want to see good results, but even if there is no good result, we don't mind. We must be sincere to Kṛṣṇa, that we have done our best without cheating. That is our duty. As servants, we shall not cheat the master—result or no result. The devotee is not sorry if there is no result: 'Never mind.' Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, 'I have brought to Beoares the *hari-nāma*, but here they are all *Māyāvādīs*. So if it is not accepted, all right. I shall take it back.' But we must do our best canvassing work: 'Please take it.' That is our mission. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare..." Śrīla Prabhupāda's speaking trailed off into chanting *japa*. He would chant for a while and then bring up another point.

Rāmeśvara Swami continued to stir the controversies, anxious to for-

tify his own convictions and preaching ability by hearing directly from Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"Very often," Rāmeśvara said, "they will say, 'It is not religion that we are concerned with, but it is brainwashing and mind control. You are chanting so many hours a day...'"

"What is it to you!" Prabhupāda interrupted sharply. "That is my business. Why do you bother yourself?"

Rāmeśvara: "But you are not giving these young people a chance to think when they chant for so many hours."

Prabhupāda: "You are thieves. You are coming to kidnap. Why shall I give you a chance? They are chanting, but you are charging brainwash. You ask them don't chant—that is your business. But that you cannot do."

Rāmeśvara: "But they say that takes away freedom to think."

Prabhupāda: "That is controversy. But you want to take his freedom, and still you are accusing us."

Prabhupāda said that first there should be a test of what is genuine religion. "We say," said Prabhupāda, "that the law given by God is religion. And it does not matter what name is given to God. If we say 'Kṛṣṇa,' that does not mean that He is not God. So before there is a challenge to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there should be an assembly discussion and decision as to what is genuine religion. We say that God is one, and whatever He has given as law, that is religion."

Rāmeśvara: "But the Christians say that according to the Bible, if God wanted us to believe in Kṛṣṇa He would have told us on Mount Sinai, and He would have told us through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, 'I am the only way.'"

Prabhupāda: "That's all right. But Jesus Christ did not explain more to you because you are rascals. You cannot follow even his one instruction, 'Thou shalt not kill.' It is not the foolishness of Jesus Christ. But because you are so rascal, you cannot understand him. Therefore he avoided you rascals. Because whatever he said, you cannot follow. So what you will understand? Therefore he stopped speaking."

Rāmeśvara: "They also say that you are ruining family life."

Prabhupāda: "That's all right. We are entering Kṛṣṇa's family."

Hari-śauri: "But if you are actually followers of God, why are you breaking up the families? Shouldn't you have love for everyone?"

Rāmeśvara: "One of the commandments is that one shall honor thy father and mother."

Prabhupāda replied that a devotee loves his mother and father by

teaching them Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hari-śauri: "My mother testified to that. When I was at home she said I was impossible to live with. When she saw me afterwards, I was very nice."

Prabhupāda: "Many. Hayagrīva's father and mother also."

Rāmeśvara: "My parents think like that too. I could have no relationship with them before, but now that I am a devotee, I actually want to help them."

Prabhupāda: "There are so many fathers and mothers who appreciate. None of our disciples are disrespectful to mother and father. Why? I never said you become disrespectful to your father and mother. At Brahmānanda's initiation, his mother was standing there and I instructed Brahmānanda, 'Take the dust of your mother's feet first, then you offer me obeisances.' So first of all he offered his obeisances to his mother. I told him, 'You have got good mother. Otherwise, how she has got a son like you?' I always say like that. I never say disrespect. In a particular case, if the father and mother are demons, he must give up their association. But we never said break up the family."

Rāmeśvara: "I think we've used up all our arguments."

Prabhupāda (still eager to argue): "First of all you said that we are depriving of food. Where is this?"

Rāmeśvara: "Yes, this is their argument, that we only let devotees eat twice a day. And there is no meat and very little protein."

Prabhupāda: "That depends on him. If he likes to eat that kind of food, you have no right to force. Then *you* are turning to force. There are different persons, and they like different types of food. If he likes twice a day, why do you insist thrice? That is his choice."

Rāmeśvara: "And sleeping only four or five hours—very little."

Prabhupāda: "Yes, because it is a waste of time."

Rāmeśvara: "But this makes his mind very weak."

Prabhupāda: "You rascal! You have nothing to do—you sleep! Napoleon used to sleep for one hour, two hours—he was such a busy man. So they are so busy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Every great man does not sleep very much. Sleeping is simply a waste of time. If he does not sleep more, it is a sign of greatness."

When Rāmeśvara Swami argued that the opposition has psychologists to testify against us, Prabhupāda replied, "We have got our psychologists."

After talking all afternoon and into the night, Prabhupāda told the devotees to rest. At ten PM he lay down, and Hari-śauri massaged his legs. "Actually," Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded, "their arguments are not very

sound. Therefore it is simply a plan of Kṛṣṇa's to help give us some prominence. It will make us more well known." Opposition, he said, was just an opportunity to preach. But to deal properly with the legal cases and other serious opposition, the devotees would have to know *how* to preach. And they would have to be spiritually strong. He was readying his men, speaking to them day and night on the twenty-four-hour train ride to Allahabad.

Allahabad

January 12

They arrived at nine A M, and half a dozen of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *sannyāst* disciples, along with a *kīrtana* party of about fifty devotees, were there to greet him. They had brought Prabhupāda's car down from Delhi, and he rode the short distance from the station to the Mela site. Thousands of pilgrims, on foot and in rickshas, crowded the streets, making Prabhupāda's progress by car slow. Finally the road ended, but the traffic continued onto the sandy flats surrounding the Trivenī (confluence of the rivers Sarasvatī, Gangā, and Yamunā). Here, within a few days, a city of tents had sprung up. Two million had camped already, with millions more arriving daily. Every spiritual group in India had its bamboo-fenced compound of tents.

As the car inched along, Prabhupāda smiled to see a group of his disciples strolling among the camps and performing *hari-nāma kīrtana*. But not until he passed through the congested main area of camps to the far end of the Trivenī did he reach the ISKCON camp. The ISKCON tents, most of which had been erected about half an hour before Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival, were located near a railway bridge on an island called Gangādvīpa; and the Trivenī bathing area was a twenty-minute walk away. The festival organizers had provided simple outdoor toilets, water taps, and a "kitchen," consisting of a cloth partition, a hole in the ground, and some bricks.

It was, as Śrīla Prabhupāda had expected, the usual Kumbha-mela austerity, but he was displeased with the camp's remote location. And when he heard that the electric lines did not reach their area, he became even more displeased. How could people come to the program in the evening if there were no lights? He called for Bhāgavata and Guru dāsa, who were in charge of organizing the ISKCON camp.

"Who got this land?" he yelled.

"When I got here," said Bhāgavata, "it was an empty field. They told me, 'We are putting you on this island. The governor is there, Kalapatrī Mahārāja is there, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is there.' I thought you were there with all the leading personalities."

Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed. "You are inexperienced, so they cheated you. All right, you did not know."

But later, when he heard that Bhāgavata and Guru dāsa had not obtained enough food for mass distribution, he became angry. Again he called for Bhāgavata.

"Why is there no *prasādam* distribution tonight?" he demanded.

"Well, Prabhupāda," Bhāgavata stuttered, "I don't know. They didn't buy any food."

"Why have they not bought?" Prabhupāda was angry. "What is the matter with you? You Americans are big spenders—simply wasting money. You have no stock of food. Why you did not stock rice, *dāl*, and wheat? Why you have no stock? What is the matter with you? You have no brain. You spend five rupees' cab fare going, five rupees' cab fare coming back, and you buy one rupee of rice. This is your mentality. You are nonsense! Every time you need something you go to the store and buy it. You don't know how to buy sufficiently one time and then use it. You cannot think like that. And why have you made this location under the elevated train? Why have you done this wrong? The train is making noise. This *paṇḍāl* is a failure. Food is not being distributed." After twenty minutes of reprimanding, Prabhupāda dismissed Bhāgavata.

A little later Prabhupāda called for Bhāgavata again. "Bhāgavata Mahārāja," he began, although Bhāgavata was not a *sannyāsī*, "if you can just get the lights on, then you will be doing good. Can you do that?" Bhāgavata said he could, and by that night the ISKCON camp had lights, although, as at all the other camps, the power was frequently shut off.

Only a few people visited the ISKCON *paṇḍāl* the first night; the weather was cold, damp, and windy. Śrīla Prabhupāda chose to sit up all night at his desk rather than lie in the cold bed. Wearing all his clothes—sweaters, a hooded coat, a *cādar*, and gloves—he sat at his desk in the darkness. A kerosene heater did little to drive the chill from the tent. Rāmeśvara Swami sat up much of the night too, relighting the heater's pilot light, which blew out every few minutes as the wind swept through the tent.

By morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda had a bad cold with runny nose and eyes. He did not go to the river for bathing but used the icy water from the pump next to his tent. His hands and feet were swollen, something

that had happened to him before during illness. When the devotees suggested he not stay at the camp, Prabhupāda insisted; he wanted to preach. People were beginning to discover his location and come to see him, so he wanted to stay and preach. Kumbha-melā, he said, was an opportunity for the devotees to preach, not merely to bathe in the Gangā.

The devotees crowded into Śrīla Prabhupāda's tent for *guru-pūjā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. They had no garland for him, but he said nothing about it. By the time he had ended his short lecture, the sun had risen. He asked Hari-śauri to put the cot outdoors, where he rested and later took massage in the sunshine.

During his massage, Prabhupāda looked over at the railroad bridge and said that he remembered this bridge from his former days in Allahabad. He said that his father had been cremated under the bridge on the same island of Gangādvīpa in 1930.

That afternoon, a group of devotees arrived from Mayāpur, and some of them immediately complained to Prabhupāda about how poorly managed the ISKCON *paṇḍal* seemed to be. Prabhupāda asked them to try to salvage the program by distributing as many books as possible, so the devotees began distributing Hindi editions of Prabhupāda's books.

The devotees took their chanting and book distributing down the main road, where they came upon the camps of different Śaivites, who sat around their fires wearing only *kaupṭhas* (loincloths). Many of them, their hair matted, their bodies covered with ashes, were puffing heavily on hashish in *chulam* pipes. Nearby, on the other side of the road, were the camps of Vaiṣṇavas from the Rāmānuja *sampradaya*. Though they were also *tyāgīs* (renunciates), and their appearance was similar to the Śaivites', they were more friendly; they were glad to see the devotees and shouted out, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma."

The devotees were amazed by the piety of the millions of pilgrims. On seeing the *kīrtana* party approach, many people offered prostrated obeisances. Others rolled on the ground, or picked up dust where the devotees had walked and put it in their mouths. And although many of the pilgrims were poor, they came forward and dropped at least a few paisa into the pot carried by one of the devotees. Anyone who gave a rupee would receive a book, and the books became so popular that people would come and ask for them by name. Some people threw money, and the *sannyāsīs* would catch it in their topeloths, which they would hold out like aprons. By the end of the day, the devotees had distributed about seven thousand pieces of literature.

On the second night, Śrīla Prabhupāda again sat up, while Rameśvara Swami tried futilely to keep the heater going. Hari-āuri had placed Śrīla Prabhupāda's dictating equipment on the desk, but Prabhupāda did not touch it.

January 14, Śrīla Prabhupāda's third day in Allahabad, was the first day of Kumbha-mela bathing and would be a special opportunity for book distribution. An ISKCON chanting party of about fifty men and several Indian *gurukula* boys was very well received as they traveled throughout the Mela area. At one-thirty P.M., the time of auspicious bathing, the *kr̥tāno* party made its way to the Trivenī. As they approached, the police cleared a path for them all the way to the water. By evening they had distributed eight thousand books, and for the first time since they had arrived, Prabhupāda expressed his pleasure at their success. He ordered some of the *sannyāsīs* to stay at the Mela until all the books were distributed.

The next morning, despite ill health, Prabhupāda took a walk. Surrounded by about twenty five disciples, he walked slowly. Although he was a small figure surrounded by tall *sannyāsīs*, the Kumbha-mela pilgrims were able to easily recognize his preeminent position, and they would break through the ranks of devotees and offer *daṇḍavats* before him. When Prabhupāda saw people approaching, he would stop walking and let them touch his feet, despite the objections of his disciples. He was already sick, and he had explained in his books that a devotee can become ill if sinful people touch his feet. Still, he did not object.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was scheduled to stay at the Mela through January 21, but his disciples pressed him to go to a place more suitable for his health. Rarely had any of them seen him so sick, and they worried. "But my only ambition," said Prabhupāda, "is that so many people can become enlightened."

Word was beginning to circulate that Śrīla Prabhupāda, the *guru* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, was staying in a camp on Gaṅgādvīpa, and more people were starting to come to see him. He said that the people coming to the Kumbha-mela were expecting all the holy men and spiritual teachers of India to be there, so he felt obligated to stay until the 21st.

Rameśvara Swami tried to advise Prabhupāda. "Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said, "there is something much more important than your giving *darśana* to these people, and that is your writing of your books. Only a few thousand people are going to see you here, but if you go on writing, we will distribute your books by the millions. Then millions of people will have your *darśana*. There is no facility for writing here. The climate is

too cold, and your health is weak. Let's go on to Bhubaneswar, where it's warm and they have healthy water."

Śrīla Prabhupāda had previously mentioned Bhubaneswar because of the water of Bindu-sarovara, which was supposed to have special medicinal properties. And he liked the argument that his writing was more important than his remaining in Allahabad to benefit a few thousand pilgrims. For the devotees on his personal staff—his secretary, servant, and cook—to see Prabhupāda going through such austerities while suffering ill health was very painful.

Finally Prabhupāda agreed to go. He called in Guru dāsa and Bhāgavata and gave them a final verbal chastising for the mismanaged *paṇḍāl*. Then, on the afternoon of the 15th, he prepared to leave.

Rāmeśvara Swami and Guru dāsa went to the train station to purchase tickets, but they found that no seats would be available for weeks. Seeking special consideration, they visited the local railway office, a lavishly appointed remodeled railway car. There they happened to meet their friend from Bombay, Mr. Gupta, and they told him of Prabhupāda's illness and of his desire to leave at once for Calcutta.

Mr. Gupta phoned Bombay and arranged for a first-class coach to be added to a train coming from Bombay to Allahabad. The devotees profusely thanked Mr. Gupta, who began proposing that Śrīla Prabhupāda travel throughout India in a royal car like the one they were in. The devotees discussed with him about how they might buy or lease such a car, and it seemed an interesting possibility. But the immediate miracle had been arranged: a coach to take Prabhupāda out of the crowded throngs of Kumbha-mela to Calcutta.

After a difficult car ride, inching along through the crowds from the Trivenī to the train station, Prabhupāda and his party finally arrived at the railway station, where government men helped him and his disciples with their luggage and saw to their comfort. From the devotees' point of view, this was the proper respect for a pure devotee of the Lord, the most important person in the world; yet such treatment was rare. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased, and he asked his secretary to type a letter, thanking Mr. Gupta, who was caring for Prabhupāda "just like a father looking after a son." He invited Mr. Gupta and his family to attend the upcoming Gaura-pūrṇimā festival in Māyāpur.

During the train ride to Calcutta, Śrīla Prabhupāda reiterated his

displeasure with the mismanaged ISKCON *pañḍāl* at Kumbha-mela. Thousands of guests were coming to the Hare Kṛṣṇa *pañḍāl* without receiving *prasādam*. Determined that the bad example not be repeated, he dictated a letter, "To All ISKCON Temple Presidents."

Please accept my blessings. Now you must arrange in each temple there must be sufficient stock of *prasadam* for distribution. You can keep first-class cooks, two or three, and they should be always engaged. Whenever any guest comes, he must get *prasād*. This arrangement must be made, that the cooks prepare ten—twenty servings at a time, of *puris* and *sabji*, and then you can add *halavah* and *pakorās* and the visitors may be supplied immediately. Whenever a gentleman comes, he must be served. As the twenty servings are being distributed, immediately the cooks prepare another twenty servings and store it. At the end of the day if no one comes, our own men will take, so there is no loss. You cannot say, "It is finished," "It is not cooked yet," "There is no supply for cooking," etc. This must be enforced rigidly.

The temple is managed by Srimatī Radharāṇī, Lakṣmījī, so why should there be want? Our philosophy is, if anyone comes, let him take *prasād*, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and be happy. Everything is being supplied by Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is not poor, so why should we deny them? This should be done at any cost. There is no difficulty. It simply requires nice management. At the end of the day you may sell or give away. If we believe that Kṛṣṇa is providing for and maintaining everyone, then why should we be misers? This means losing faith in Kṛṣṇa and thinking that we are the doers and suppliers. We are confident Kṛṣṇa will supply! Let the whole world come. We can feed them. So please do this nicely. Begin at once.

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked to hear the reviews of his books, as published in *The Krishna Consciousness Movement Is Authorized*. His secretary read one review after another—professors praising Prabhupāda's work and requesting him to go on producing such valuable books. After hearing the reviews, Prabhupāda lay down to rest. "The pen is mightier than the sword!" Rāmeśvara Swamī declared.

"Yes," Śrīla Prabhupāda answered. "It is a revolution. That is what I thought as I wrote on and on. The Communists have changed the lives of people throughout the world by their empty literature and false promises. Why not a revolution started on the basis of the absolute knowledge?"

January 18, 1977

After the intense cold of Kumbha-mela, Prabhupāda had recuperated

a couple of days in Calcutta. His head cold had gone away, but the swelling in his hands and feet persisted, as did other maladies. Externally, he was diabetic and suffered from poor digestion, as well as from the general dwindling of physical powers common to an eighty-one year old body. His condition was not suited for continual travel, hard work, frequent lectures, and taxing management.

Yet Prabhupāda was transcendental to his apparent material condition. Although sometimes he would inquire about cures, mostly he was callous toward his poor health. Even after receiving a doctor's advice or concluding himself what was good for his health, he would often ignore it in favor of what he thought was best for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Previously, in Vrndavana he had felt better by drinking the fresh well water, so he thought he might also get relief by drinking the water of the famous Bindu sarovara near Bhubaneswar. Besides, ISKCON had recently acquired a small donated plot of land outside the city, and Śrīla Prabhupāda's Oriyan disciple Gaura govinda Swamī had gone there, constructed two simple dwellings, and was making plans to build a temple.

The train journey from Calcutta to Bhubaneswar was twelve hours, another opportunity for Rāmeśvara Swamī to probe. His thirty-day assignment as Prabhupāda's secretary was almost over, and then he would return to Los Angeles and his American BBT duties. He had come to India set on inquiring from Prabhupāda about whether there would be world war and, if so, how book distribution would continue and how in the future a new world order of Kṛṣṇa consciousness would be introduced. Prabhupāda had answered many of his questions, but there were always more.

The Puri Express left Calcutta around ten PM. After taking a massage, Śrīla Prabhupāda stretched out on the lower bunk to rest, and Hari śauri and Rāmeśvara took the two bunks opposite him. Around midnight Prabhupāda turned on his light, sat up, and began chanting softly on his beads. Within a few minutes, Rāmeśvara awoke and, seeing his spiritual master sitting up, paid obeisances and also sat up, waiting expectantly. Immediately Prabhupāda began to speak about the inevitability of war between Russia and America. Even if America took to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the war would be inevitable—the only way to stop the godlessness of communism. When Rāmeśvara asked if that war would be within his lifetime, Prabhupāda said it was difficult to say. It depended, he said, on the devotees' distribution of books and *Back to Godhead* magazines. Although in Russia the government tried to strictly control all literature, Kṛṣṇa conscious books were entering nonetheless and were immediately becoming popular. The Communist leaders were becoming fearful, but they also

had some respect for Indian culture. Prabhupāda said that by increasing book distribution, America, and thereafter the whole world, would become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

"So you have to push on more and more," he said. "This opposition, brainwashing charges, means they are recognizing this as a culture. They may like it or not, but they recognize it as something permanent."

Prabhupāda said he had no political aim, but he knew that Indian culture coupled with American money could save the world. "You must think in terms of the whole world," he said. "Not just one nation. That is our preaching. That is the duty of the G.B.C."

The talk went on for more than two hours, and Rāmeśvara felt completely satisfied by the intimate instructions. Although he had once before asked some of the same questions about book distribution and the war, Prabhupāda had chosen not to answer. But now he revealed some of his thoughts, just as a father instructing a trustworthy son.

Conditions on the ISKCON land in Bhubaneswar were primitive: two small mud-walled huts with thatched roofs. Śrīla Prabhupāda occupied one eight-by-twelve room in one of the cottages, and his servant and secretary stayed just on the other side of the wall. Electricity had been installed on the land a few days before, so Hari-śauri had placed an electric lamp and the dictating machine on Prabhupāda's desk.

The second small building, about twenty-five feet from Prabhupāda's hut, was a tiny temporary temple room. A shabby canvas roof spanned the open area between the two buildings, and Prabhupāda's *vyāsāsana* was beneath this, arranged so he could lecture at outdoor gatherings. Two rented tents also stood on the land, to accommodate visiting devotees during Prabhupāda's stay. Prabhupāda's outdoor toilet facilities, about twenty-five feet behind his hut, consisted of a latrine and a separate area for bathing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not mind the primitive facilities; in fact, he liked them. Although he was ill and for personal comfort could have been residing in his choice of comfortable buildings in the West—a manor in London, a castle in Paris, a penthouse apartment in New York City—he felt perfectly at home and happy living in a primitive mud-and-thatched hut on a secluded patch of land in the dust of Orissa.

Sitting on the outdoor *vyāsāsono*, Prabhupāda spoke to a small gathering of devotees and some local villagers. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he said, had two favorite places: Bengal and Orissa. And in Orissa (Jagannātha Puri) He spent the last eighteen years of His life. He went to Vṛndāvana and South India but then returned here to stay with His personal associates, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, and Śikhī Mahiti. Prabhupāda quoted a scriptural reference indicating that the spiritual movement for this age will begin from Utkala, or Orissa. Śrīla Prabhupāda said Orissa was very special to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and his own Guru Mahārāja was also born here, at Puri. "Now we have got a little place here," he said. "It doesn't matter if it takes time, but slowly but surely we can develop this center. Especially since Bhubaneswar is going to be the capital of Orissa. In the future many tourists will come to see other attractions of Orissa. Now it is up to the Oriyans to develop this idea."

Prabhupāda spoke with Gaura-govinda Swami and told him to begin advertising—private meetings in the afternoon and a regular lecture-*kṛtano-prasādam* program at night. That evening very few visitors came. ISKCON had done little preaching in Orissa, and Prabhupāda was not as well known. Mostly local farmers, villagers, and poor children came—for the free *prasādom*. Prabhupāda told the audience that he could speak in three languages—English, Bengali, and Hindi—but not Oṛiyā. He therefore decided to speak in English and have Gaura-govinda translate. He would speak a few sentences and then pause while Gaura-govinda gave the Oṛiyā.

"In this material world," said Prabhupāda during his evening lecture, "always the attempt is to defy the supremacy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At the present moment the so-called scientists' only business is how to defy the supremacy of God. Naturally this movement has to face many impediments, because at the present moment the whole world is practically godless. Even in our country, in India, where *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa—even here the same attempt is going on. Big, big scholars, big, big politicians, they take *Bhagavad-gītā* in their hand to show that they are great authorities in *Bhagavad-gītā*. But they are presenting commentation just to defy Kṛṣṇa." Prabhupāda spoke for about ten minutes. There were no questions.

Bhubaneswar's hot days and cool nights just suited Prabhupāda. After resting for a few hours, he rose and began translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

It was the first time he had done so since leaving Bombay for Kumbhamela. He was nearing the end of the Ninth Canto.

Gaura-govinda Mahārāja had scheduled a cornerstone-laying ceremony for a new temple on February 2, the appearance day of Lord Nityānanda. Prabhupāda agreed to stay until then and leave the next morning.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's failing health prevented him from eating fried foods. His expert cooks in Bhubaneswar, Palika-devī dāśī and Śrutirūpā-devī dāśī, carefully prepared meals that were nutritious and tasty but without *ghee*. Sometimes, however, he specifically requested certain fried foods but would later complain that they didn't agree with him.

Rāmeśvara Swami, Gargamuni Swami, and Bhavānanda Goswami were sitting with Śrīla Prabhupāda in his hut discussing deprogramming cases with him. They were saying that these enemies of ISKCON were so fanatical that for Śrīla Prabhupāda to go to America would be dangerous. Śrīla Prabhupāda interrupted, however, changing the subject. "Our immediate problem," he said, "is toward my health. I am not digesting food. Therefore there is some swelling in the hands and the legs."

"Is it affecting your translation work?" asked Rāmeśvara Swami.

"That it has not affected," said Prabhupāda. "It is going on. I have translated seventeen volumes. That may not be affected." He reached over and turned on the dictating machine, and they heard a few seconds of his most recent dictation from the twenty-fourth chapter of the Ninth Canto.

"We know you have a very low opinion of doctors," said Rāmeśvara Swami.

"I wish to die without a doctor," Prabhupāda said. "I may be seriously ill, but don't call a doctor. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Don't be disturbed. Everyone has to die. Let us die peacefully, without doctor. All this medicine, injections, and prohibitions, this, that. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and depend on Kṛṣṇa. *Nārtasya cāgadāṁ udanvati* . . . that is Prahlāda Mahārāja's verse. Find out this—Seventh Canto." Hari-śauri reached to Prabhupāda's bookcase for the Seventh Canto, Volume Two, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Within a few moments he found the verse and read aloud:

"My Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, O Supreme, because of a bodily conception of life, embodied souls neglected and not cared for by You cannot do anything for their betterment. Whatever remedies they accept, although

perhaps temporarily beneficial, are certainly impermanent. For example, a father and mother cannot protect their child, a physician and medicine cannot relieve a suffering patient, and a boat on the ocean cannot protect a drowning man."

"These are facts," said Prabhupāda.

"That's ultimately," said Gargamuni Swami. "But maybe we could give you some temporary relief. Because when you are ill, we feel—"

"Yes," Prabhupāda conceded. "But no severe treatment should be accepted. Better not to take. Better to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Bhavānanda. "In the past, when your health was not good, they have begun chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in all the temples around the world—a special additional *kīrtana*. Perhaps we could institute that."

"No," said Prabhupāda, "not for my health. You do your *kīrtana* ordinary. That first stroke on Second Avenue, that was almost fatal. You were present, I think?" Prabhupāda turned to Gargamuni, and they reminisced about the stroke in 1967.

Hari-śauri said a homeopathic doctor had just prescribed some special medicine, and Prabhupāda agreed to try it. Gargamuni said that his father used to have a similar swelling, but his had been due to diabetes. "I have diabetes," said Prabhupāda. Gargamuni Swami said his father used to give himself an insulin injection every morning. "There are many gentlemen who take insulin at least once a day," said Prabhupāda, although he obviously had no intentions of doing so.

Prabhupāda's main health program was his diet, but even in that he was not very strict. An Indian cook named Shantilal was present in Bhubaneswar, and he used a lot of spices and *ghee* in cooking for Gargamuni Swami and his men. Sometimes Prabhupāda would ask for some of what Shantilal had cooked, and this greatly disturbed Prabhupāda's servants and cooks, although they could do nothing about it. Gargamuni had also been ill recently, and when Prabhupāda first saw him with his cook Shantilal, he had said, "I thought you were sick."

"Yes," Gargamuni had replied, "but still I have to eat. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are eating very simply. You are not eating spiced food?"

"Sometimes I also have to have spices," Prabhupāda replied. "Otherwise there is no taste. And without that taste, what is the use of life?" Then in a joking spirit Prabhupāda and Gargamuni Swami commiserated,

saying they were not going to stop eating tasty *prasādam*.

"We'd rather die," laughed Gargamuni Swami, and Prabhupāda also laughed.

On his last day as Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary in India, Rāmeśvara Swami entered Prabhupāda's hut and inquired again about war in the future.

"You have mentioned several times," he began, "that there is a conflict which is inevitable between Russia and America."

"No," said Prabhupāda. "If they understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, both of them, then there will be no conflict. Now we are publishing in Russian."

When Rāmeśvara asked what would happen if many cities were bombed, Prabhupāda said that people would come to their senses and adopt a simpler, agrarian life, just as the ISKCON farm communities were demonstrating "That will be a good lesson for them," said Prabhupāda.

"So is this conflict part of the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?"

"Oh, yes. *Paritrāṇāya sādhanām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām* * To conflict means to finish their sinful activities—finished. Stop it."

"So after the conflict there will be an opportunity to influence people?"

"We shall take every opportunity," said Prabhupāda. "We are the best opportunists. *Anukālyena kṛṣṇa*. This is *anukūla*—favorable for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness—and we shall immediately accept it. It doesn't matter what it is. We do not depend on the public opinion, that this is good or this is bad. Good means if it is favorable for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Rāmeśvara said that it seemed the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement would have to grow much more before it could actually be as influential as Prabhupāda was indicating.

"It will grow," said Prabhupāda. "It is growing. Simply our workers should be very sincere and strict, and it will grow. Nobody can object. That's a fact. Simply we have to be very strict and sincere, and nobody can check."

"We will be the only ones who have any vision of what to do after the war," said Rāmeśvara.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "We have got clear vision. We are not putting any theory. We are always presenting fact, and that is materializing

* Lord Kṛṣṇa's mission is not only to protect His devotees, but also to curb the miscreants.

Just like we started our farm communities. It is materializing gradually. It is not yet fully organized. Still there is hope that it will give peace to the people. There is sufficient hope.”

After a few days, more of the people of Bhubaneswar began to visit Śrīla Prabhupāda. One evening he was in his room speaking with several men when one of them asked, “Well, Swamiji, actually what is God?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda opened his eyes widely in disbelief. “What is this?” he said. “You are from India, and you do not know what is God? This is the degradation of Kali-yuga.” Śrīla Prabhupāda continued his sharp criticism and then explained that Indians have the special benefit of Vedic literature and culture; therefore, every Indian should know God.

Prabhupāda gave his first public lecture the next evening, and about 150 people attended. He began his lecture, “Last night some gentleman questioned, ‘What is God?’” Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that Śrī Bhagavān personally appears in “our country,” Bhārata-varṣa, and leaves His instructions, which have been accepted by the *ācāryas*. India, Prabhupāda explained, is especially favored, since God personally incarnates there and imparts His instructions. “But at the present moment,” Prabhupāda continued, “our young men are inquiring, ‘What is God?’ So why has this happened? It has happened because we are making progress toward animal civilization.”

Anyone with a bodily conception of the self, Prabhupāda said—anyone thinking of his identity in relation to family, country, or race—was no better than a cow or an ass, according to Vedic *śāstra*. He repeatedly warned that Indians should be careful of sinking to the position of having to ask what is God. Unfortunately, when he called for questions after his lecture, it was the same thing.

“I want to know the meaning of the word *Kṛṣṇa*,” a man asked.

“You do not know what is the meaning of *Kṛṣṇa*?” Prabhupāda retorted.

“You do not know?”

The man said something in Oṛiyā and then said in English, “The etymological meaning.”

“*Kṛṣṇa*,” said Prabhupāda, “means all-attractive. *Kṛṣṇ, karṣati*. Yes, *Kṛṣṇa* means the attractive, all-attractive. And besides that, you do not know *Kṛṣṇa*? That is the difficulty, that our people have become so degraded that they are asking what is God, what is *Kṛṣṇa*. Someone has studied the Seventh Canto of *Rāmāyana*, but now he is asking, ‘Whose father is

Sītā?" So this is the position. We are born in the country where Kṛṣṇa spoke everything, and now we are asking, "What is the meaning of Kṛṣṇa? What is God?" This is the position, very degraded position."

While Prabhupāda rode in his car to the park for his morning walk, he saw billboards and banners announcing that Sanjay Gandhi was coming to town. Sanjay Gandhi's particular political platform was that everyone should become literate. Looking out the window at the poor, barren land, Prabhupāda said, "What is the benefit of literacy when the people are poor and starving?" He said that the local people were coming to the ISKCON evening program just to get a little *kichari*—not because it was *prasādam*, but because they were hungry. So if after many years of education they learned to read but still earned little money and had the same employment, then what was the benefit? Life was not for such education. Prabhupāda lamented that so much land was lying uncultivated.

Seeing several men jogging, Prabhupāda commented that most people were hungry and poor while a few were living in big houses, overeating, and running to lose fat. "So he will educate the people," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "and after some time they will join the Nazalite movement and kill the rich man. No. Everyone should be engaged in working the land." Prabhupāda said his ISKCON men should also work, because unless they were properly engaged they would gossip and fall victim to sex desire.

Since arriving in Bhubaneswar, Śrīla Prabhupāda had several times talked about going to Jagannātha Puri, about an hour away. Since he had hopes of one day building a big center in Puri, he wanted to see some plots of land for sale. He hadn't been to Puri, he said, since 1958. Since his Western disciples were not allowed to enter the Jagannātha temple, Prabhupāda said he would not enter either. But he would go to Puri to see what land was available.

Early one morning Prabhupāda set out in his car for Puri, on the Bay of Beogal. He looked at several properties there, but either their locations were poor or the buildings were deteriorated, or both. Prabhupāda walked along the beach with his men, and the surf was pounding. "I was jumping here," he laughed. "In 1920 or '21 I came here. At that time I was married. I was married in 1918. I came after appearing for my B.A.

examination. And because I was jubilant, I was jumping. When the waves came I was jumping. Now it is fifty-seven years after. They say we do not change bodies, but where is that body? Now I am walking with stick. Then I was jumping. I am still here. I remember. But the body has changed. What is the difficulty to understand? I am the same. Otherwise, how I am remembering all these things? But that body is now lost. *Tāthā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*. Why this simple philosophy these rascals cannot understand?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed a day at the beachside Tourist Bungalow, and one of his Godbrothers, Śyāmasundara Brahmācārī, from the local Purusotama Gaudiya Math visited. After he left, Sri Sevasiva Rath, a member of the *pūjārī* committee of the Jagannātha temple, also came to visit. Prabhupāda spoke to him about the possibility of ISKCON devotees entering the Jagannātha temple. To bar the Western Vaiṣṇavas from entering the temple was prejudiced and ignorant. Since the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement were fully engaged in spiritual life, they should not be considered unfit simply because of their birth status or race. Sevasiva Rath was friendly and agreed with Śrīla Prabhupāda; he promised he would do what he could to help. He also told Prabhupāda about a book he had just published and invited him to attend a small *paṇḍal* meeting the next evening, at which the book would be inaugurated. Prabhupāda agreed.

Later, Prabhupāda was sitting on the veranda outside his room at the Tourist Bungalow. As he sat watching Shantilal preparing lunch in the back of Gargamuni's van, he could smell the aromatic spices cooking in the *ghṛee*. He called to Gargamuni Swami and asked that a plate of Shantilal's cooking be brought to him when it was ready. Soon Prabhupāda was enjoying a meal of rice, *dāl*, *puris*, *spicy sabjts*, and *chutney*. He said that Shantilal cooked wonderfully and that devotees in all the ISKCON temples should learn this art. If the meat-eaters could take such *prasādam*, he said, they would give up their sinful habit.

As Prabhupāda sat in his hotel room that evening with a few disciples at his feet, he reminisced about how he had come to America in 1965 and had suffered two heart attacks at sea. "They say that anyone who gets a third heart attack," said Prabhupāda, "they must expire. I had two attacks on the ship, and then in New York a third one—paralyzed. Left side was paralyzed. I do not know how I was saved. And one girl, that captain's wife, she studied astrology. She said, 'Swami, if you can survive your seventieth year, then you will live for one hundred years.'"

Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples laughed.

"So," Prabhupāda continued, "somehow or other I have survived my seventieth year. I do not know whether . . . They say I will live for a hundred years. But seventieth year was severe. Three heart attacks and paralysis. And I was without any family. At that time none of you were with me. I was alone. I wasn't dependent on anyone. But on the ship I saw that Kṛṣṇa was going to save me. I was going for His mission."

Devotees were regularly bringing up the topics of brainwashing and deprogramming. That evening, one of the devotees mentioned that sometimes the opposition was taking the testimony of an exdisciple of Prabhupāda's, who would speak against the movement.

"Because he is a rascal," Prabhupāda explained, "therefore he is excommunicated. My Guru Mahārāja kicked him out. So what is the value of his testimony? That is natural that someone will go out and speak against us. These things will happen in preaching. You cannot expect very smooth path." The devotees agreed, and someone added that one of Jesus' closest disciples had betrayed him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda compared the present trouble to the troubles he had encountered when he first came to America. He reminisced further about his near fatal illness in 1967 and his return to India, where he had recuperated. But even after returning to America, he commented, he had not been able to sleep at night because of a sound in his ear.

"As long as the body will be there," Prabhupāda said, "there will be so many troubles. Kṛṣṇa has advised that they will come and go. Don't care for it. *Āgamāpāyino 'nityaś tāmś tatikṣasva bhārata*. So bodily troubles, mental troubles, and enemies—so many impediments will come. What can be done? We have to tolerate. That is the material world. We cannot expect smooth, very happy. That is not possible. Kṛṣṇa was advising that to Arjuna, what to speak of us. Kṛṣṇa never says, 'I have made some magic. You will have to suffer.' He never gave Arjuna any tablet. So we have to follow that. The modern gurus say, 'I will give you some magic ash. There will be no trouble.' But Kṛṣṇa, what did He say? He said, 'No, tolerate.' He did not say, 'You are ass. I will give you some ash.' Neither did Arjuna ask, 'Why do You ask me to fight? Give me some ash. I'll throw it.' He was not such a fool that he asked some magic from Kṛṣṇa to kill his enemies. Actually he fought. This is *Bhagavad-gītā*. So face

things as they are, and depend on Kṛṣṇa That is our duty Don't expect any ash, miracle, magic"

The next morning, from the porch, Śrīla Prabhupāda was watching the devotees swimming in the Bay of Bengal Calling Hari sauri over, he said he would like to bathe in the ocean and asked him what he thought about it Hari sauri and the other devotees present all thought it was a good idea Sea water was supposed to be very good for health, they said Prabhupāda said he would try it and after taking his morning massage walked down to the seashore, wearing his *gamcha* and carrying a towel The ocean shore was about a hundred yards from the hotel, and by the time Prabhupāda reached the water, all the devotees were running after him in their *gamchas*

Some of the devotees were already in the ocean, and when Prabhupāda reached the water's edge, they all gathered around him As the waves glided in and swirled around Prabhupāda's feet, Hari sauri scooped palmfuls of water and began to bathe Prabhupāda's body—his arms, chest, and head—washing away the mustard seed oil he had applied during the massage. Soon other devotees began reverently splashing handfuls of water onto Prabhupāda's body Standing almost up to his knees in water, the bright sunshine illuminating his golden hued body, Prabhupāda laughed as the devotees joined in

The devotees realized that this pastime was just like an *abhiṣeka*, or bathing of the Deity, and when Guru kṛpā Swamī began to sing the prayers for bathing the Deity—*cintāmaṇi prakara sadmasu*—the other devotees joined in, singing and taking part in the *abhiṣeka* by the sea Śrīla Prabhupāda enjoyed it, sometimes putting his head forward to indicate that he wanted water poured on his head, then closing his eyes as the devotees poured the water When Prabhupāda lost his balance for a moment, Hari sauri grabbed him Prabhupāda's feet had been sinking into the sand, and when he held one foot out it was muddy As he wriggled his toes, a devotee poured water on the foot, washing it clean Prabhupāda then bent over, put ocean water in his mouth, and spat it out Only Guru kṛpā Swamī was quick enough to catch some of the water and drink it

As Prabhupāda allowed the devotees to participate in bathing and gently massaging him, the devotees were carried away by ecstatic feelings After about ten minutes, Prabhupāda came out of the water, changed his clothes,

and walked back to the hotel, where two devotees escorted him to a comfortable chair, sat him down, and carried him up to his room for his afternoon rest.

In the afternoon, Sevasiva Rath came again to see Prabhupāda, accompanied this time by another Purī *brāhmaṇa*. They gave Prabhupāda some Jagannātha *prasādam* and sang the *Jagannāthāṣṭakam*. In silent appreciation Prabhupāda listened as the *brāhmaṇas* sang the famous prayers with each verse ending *jagannāthah svāmī nayana-patha-gāmi bhavatu me* ("O Lord of the universe, kindly be visible unto me.") When the two *brāhmaṇas* finished singing, Prabhupāda said, "So these European and American Vaiṣṇavas, they are hankering after *jagannāthah svāmī nayana-patha-gāmi bhavatu me*. Now it is through your intervention that they may be able to see Jagannātha Svāmī. They are hankering like that—*jagannāthah svāmī nayana-patha-gāmi*."

Sevasiva Rath again expressed his sympathy about the devotees' not entering Jagannātha's temple. He also told Prabhupāda more about the book he had published, a compilation of select verses from Jagannātha dāsa's translation of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into Oṛiyā. Sevasiva had also written some commentary, and his book was to be inaugurated at a function that evening. Prabhupāda again promised to attend and address Purī's *brāhmaṇas* and religionists.

That evening, Śrīla Prabhupāda was guest of honor at the outdoor *pandal* on the beach, and his disciples accompanied him to the stage with a rousing *kīrtana*. Prabhupāda took his seat. After the *kīrtana* ended, one of the managers of the Jagannātha temple came forward and garlanded Śrīla Prabhupāda. Sevasiva then announced, "We thank A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who has been kind enough to grace this occasion wherein we have assembled this evening to pay our respectful homage to His Holiness Jagannātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who was a contemporary of Lord Caitanya." Suddenly, about five *brāhmaṇas* sitting on a platform rose and walked off the stage to join a *kīrtana* party in front of an altar in a nearby field. It seemed strange to the devotees that these men had to leave just when Śrīla Prabhupāda was going to speak.

"I thank you very much," Śrīla Prabhupāda began, but then the sound system failed. Śrīla Prabhupāda paused, while one of his own disciples, an electrician, corrected the problem. Śrīla Prabhupāda resumed speaking, his voice amplified above the distraction of the nearby *kīrtanas*.

"So in our humble way," Prabhupāda was saying, "we are trying to

introduce Jagannātha Svāmī's culture. *Jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me.*" Sevasiva had invited Prabhupāda explicitly to speak about his new book, and Prabhupāda had already mentioned privately to his disciples that these people were inviting him to serve their own purpose. But now Prabhupāda took the occasion to speak about Lord Jagannātha, rather than about the Oriyan Jagannātha dāsa. He had a special message in mind.

"You will be very much pleased to know," he continued, "that in the year 1967 I introduced Ratha-yātrā in San Francisco, and it has been going on continually for the last nine or ten years. And the government, they have fixed up a holiday for Ratha-yātrā. We have the twentieth of July as a government-fixed-up holiday for Ratha-yātrā. And people take part in the Ratha-yātrā. Not only my devotees, but even outsiders. Ten to twelve thousand people attend, and we distribute *prasādam* to all of them. They feel very much obliged. And the newspaper writes that people in general never felt such ecstasy as they are feeling in the Ratha-yātrā festival. The police say that the crowds in the Western countries, as soon as there is a big crowd, they create disturbance. But the police were surprised that this crowd is not a window-breaking crowd.

"Next we introduced Ratha-yātrā in London. And in London, Trafalgar Square—it is the most famous square within the city—there is a big column called Nelson's Column. Our *ratha* was so high that *The Guardian* newspaper criticized this Ratha-yātrā as a rival to Nelson's Column. Next we introduced Ratha-yātrā in Philadelphia. And last year we introduced Ratha-yātrā in New York. And we also have Ratha-yātrās in Melbourne and Sydney and in Paris.

"So in the Western countries Ratha-yātrā is being introduced one after another, and Jagannātha Svāmī is attracting the attention of the Western people." Suddenly some of the men on the stage began talking loudly among themselves in Oṛiyā. Prabhupāda stopped, turned, and said, "What is that?" The talking subsided, and he continued.

"So people will come in your Jagannātha Purī now from all parts of the world. That is beneficial from various points of view. From the point of view of the tourist program, the government will benefit. When people are attracted to see Jagannātha Purī, Jagannātha Svāmī, that is good. But unfortunately you do not allow these foreigners to enter the temple. How it can be adjusted? This stumbling block should be dissolved, that you want Jagannātha Svāmī to be compact within your home and you

do not expand the mercy of Jagannātha.

"He is *Jagannātha*!" He is not only just Purīnātha or Oriyānātha. He is Jagannātha. Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *bhoktāraṁ yujña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka maheśvaram*. That is the definition of *jagannātha*—*sarva-loka-maheśvaram*.† So why you should deny the inhabitants of *sarva-loka* the *darśana* of Jagannātha? Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never approved such things. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said *pṛthivīte ache yata nagarādi grāma/sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*. When the thing is being done and when they are eager to come here, why you should restrain? What is the cause? This is not very good."

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to argue that foreigners who had taken to Vaiṣṇavism should be allowed to enter the temple of Lord Jagannātha. Offenses to the Vaiṣṇavas, he said, were condemned by Lord Caitanya. Therefore, Prabhupāda declared, he had come to Purī specifically to request the leaders to remove this offensive restriction and be friendly to the foreign devotees. He invited Purī's leaders to come and see the Jagannātha and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples all over the world and see how the foreigners had actually become pure Vaiṣṇavas, strictly avoiding sinful life. "No illicit sex, no meat-eating, no fish-eating, no egg-eating, no intoxication, no gambling," said Prabhupāda.

"Why you should not receive them as Vaiṣṇava and give them proper reception? That is my request. I hope there are many learned scholars and devotees present here. They should endeavor to remove this restriction of shortsightedness, and let us combinedly work with Jagannātha to preach the *bhakti* cult for the benefit of the whole world."

As Prabhupāda finished his lecture, Hari-śauri leaned forward and asked Prabhupāda if he wanted to answer questions. But Sevasiva came quickly to Prabhupāda's side and said, "No, don't put their questions." Sevasiva picked up the small paperback volume which was supposed to have been the topic of the evening's presentation. "The *Bhāgavata* of Jagannātha," said Sevasiva, and he handed it to Śrīla Prabhupāda, requesting him to now speak, as expected, about the merit of the book and its inauguration. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked indifferently at the small book in his hand. Speaking over the microphone he said, "So what shall I do? Of course, I do not know the Oriyā language, but it is said that it is *Bhāgavata* of Jagannātha. So it is inaugurated today." Prabhupāda placed the book down and stood up to leave. The audience applauded.

* Lord of the universe.

† Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor and controller of everything.

Śrīla Prabhupāda then walked off across the sands in the dark, followed by his disciples, and entered a nearby Gaudiya Math temple, where the devotees held *kīrtana*. They then went to another Gaudiya Math temple, Purusottama Math, and again held *kīrtana*.

During the chanting at Purusottama Math, Prabhupāda sat in a chair. When he was ready to leave, he began to stand, using his cane as a support, but suddenly, as he was about halfway up, he dropped down again onto the chair. Hari-śauri had to lift him to his feet by holding him under the arms. Prabhupāda said nothing, but walked slowly out of the hall and got into the car. Not everyone had noticed Prabhupāda's momentary collapse, but Hari-śauri, on returning to his room, anxiously wrote of it in a letter to a Godbrother as "yet another sign that Śrīla Prabhupāda's health is very quickly dwindling away." Certainly none of the Purī *paṇḍitas* had noticed any dwindling from Śrīla Prabhupāda's presentation on behalf of Lord Jagannātha, Lord of the universe.

In Bhubaneswar, just before three A.M. on the morning of January 30, Śrīla Prabhupāda began dictating the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One of his servants in the next room heard through the wall and became so excited that he awakened the other devotees. The dividing wall between the two rooms was about six feet high, with an opening above the wall up to the thatched roof. Light from Śrīla Prabhupāda's room shone into the next room through that opening, and his voice, although faint, could be clearly heard. He was dictating a short description of each chapter of the Tenth Canto.

"The first chapter, which has sixty-nine verses," he began, "describes Mahārāja Parīkṣit's eagerness to learn about the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and it also tells us how Kāṁsa killed the six sons of Devakī because of his fear of being killed by her eighth child. The Second Chapter contains forty-two verses, . . ." Prabhupāda's patient description of each of the ninety chapters was the epitome of faithful rendering of *paramparā* knowledge—without concoction, interpretation, addition, or subtraction. Therefore, he spoke with the same full faith that the original speaker of the *Bhāgavatam*, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, had spoken with five thousand years ago to Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

"Simply by chanting or repeating *kṛṣṇa-kathā*," Prabhupāda was saying, "one is liberated from the contamination of Kali-yuga. This is the mission of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: to hear about Kṛṣṇa and thus be liberated

from material bondage." Sitting up on their blankets, the devotees listened, they would not return to sleep. It was an important, historic moment.

The Tenth Canto begins five thousand years ago, when the entire world was oppressed by demonic rulers, and Prabhupāda was comparing the situation then to the present situation. His words were faint, but not weak. He was unhesitating, sure. "Without reference to the supreme power of the Personality of Godhead," Prabhupāda dictated, "demons assert themselves to be independent kings and presidents, and thus they create a disturbance by increasing their military power. When such disturbances are very prominent, Kṛṣṇa appears. At present also, various demonic states all over the world are increasing their military power in many ways, and the whole situation has become distressful. Therefore Kṛṣṇa has appeared by His name in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, which will certainly diminish the burden of the world. Philosophers, religionists, and people in general must take to this movement very seriously, for man-made plans and devices will not help bring peace on earth."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was like a field general in his tent, and his disciples were like his infantry men. They knew they were hearing his battle strategies even before the information was disseminated through the chain of command. They were thrilled. With faith they heard that just as Kṛṣṇa had defeated the demonic rulers, so the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement would counteract the demonic culture of the present age.

Later, on the morning walk, one of the devotees mentioned to Prabhupāda that they were planning to put his name on a sign on the door, saying that on January 30 at 2:50 A.M. Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Tenth Canto. Prabhupāda was pleasantly surprised that they had heard him. "Kṛṣṇa's flute can be heard in the Tenth Canto," said Prabhupāda, "and the chapters Twenty-nine through Thirty-four are the smiling face of Kṛṣṇa."

Another of Śrīla Prabhupāda's G.B.C. men, Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, had recently replaced Rāmeśvara Swami as Prabhupāda's secretary for the month. "Śrīla Prabhupāda," Satsvarūpa asked one evening while sitting with Prabhupāda in his quarters, "when I first came here Rāmeśvara Mahārāja said that you had been speaking of how Kṛṣṇa consciousness would rise to power in the United States, and I find it hard to have that vision, since now it is just the opposite."

"It is true," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "but now it has only taken its roots. You have to water and protect it, then you will get fruit. You have to give it protection. People must hear about us by our books, and we have to talk about the books."

"So it is not that it will happen overnight?"

"No," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Gradually it will grow. The seed is there. Now protect it by introducing more and more books in every house."

Again, Prabhupāda referred to the upcoming New York court case. "At least tell them to read our books," he said. "This is our statement. Our defense is that you first of all read these books and then give your statement. Finish this, and then give your judgment. Give them all these eighty-four books!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda became excited by the thought of the judges and lawyers reading all his books. He was completely serious, and he insisted the devotees get the authorities to read the books as legal evidences. Śrīla Prabhupāda continued, "Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, 'Surrender to Me and give up all other religion.' Now the question may arise, 'Why we shall surrender?' Then you can argue and go on for three years. The whole thing will come out: What is God? What is creation? What is your position? Why you should surrender? And so on, and so on, so on. What do you think?"

"Yes, we should introduce the books as much as possible," said Satsvarūpa. "I'll write a letter to New York and tell them to emphasize this."

"Bring all these books in the court," Prabhupāda said. "One time in Calcutta there was a big lawyer named Mr. Ghosh. So on one case he brought so many books for argument. The judges were friends, so they very mildly criticized him, 'Oh, Mr. Ghosh, you have brought the whole library?' 'Yes, my lord,' said Mr. Ghosh, 'just to teach you law.'" Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed and repeated, "'Yes, my lord, just to teach you law.'"

Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to apply the same logic in the New York case. If the judge objected and said, "Why have you brought so many books to bother me?" the devotees should reply, "You have to hear. It may take twelve years to hear, but you have to hear. This is the law." It sounded difficult, but the devotees knew they would have to try. This was Śrīla Prabhupāda's specific instruction for handling the case.

"We have to say," said Prabhupāda, "we never tried to brainwash. We have done exactly according to *śāstra*, authority. Here is the evidence. We have not manufactured anything. So they must read all the books. I think you should take defense in that way."

"Our defense statement is already written in your books," said Hari-āuri.

"Certain sections?" asked Satsvarūpa. "Or should we say that they have to read all the books?"

Prabhupāda shouted, "All! Line to line. Our defense is eighty-four volumes."

"But they'll say," said Guru-kṛpā Swami, "If we read all these books, we'll become brainwashed too."

"That is my duty," said Prabhupāda, "—you are trying to brainwash me, and I am trying to brainwash you. This is going on. That is the tussle. It is wrestling. You are trying your strength. I am trying my strength. Otherwise, where is there fight? You have got right to not agree with me. I have got right to not agree with you. Now let us settle."

In Bhubaneswar on February 2, the appearance day of Lord Nityānanda, Śrīla Prabhupāda held the cornerstone-laying ceremony. About a thousand people came during the day to take *prasādam*. Sevāsīva Rath attended and spoke. Prabhupāda's disciple Svārūpa Dāmodara also spoke, as did Prabhupāda himself. Later, Prabhupāda discussed with his disciples about how to manage the Bhubaneswar center. Some of the *sannyāsīs* admitted to Prabhupāda that they did not see much potential there.

"Why not?" questioned Prabhupāda. "This is the capital of Orissa. People are coming here. We have to have centers in every town. Even if it is not a big center, some have to work and stay here. Even if the people are coming every night only to eat the *kichari*, that is also preaching."

One of the devotees said that it was too far from town and that Orissa was too poor. A better idea might be to try to build a big temple in Jagannātha Puri. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied that to build in Jagannātha Puri was all right, but that Bhubaneswar was also important. Prabhupāda's Oriyan disciple, Gaura-govinda Swami, told Prabhupāda that as soon as the annual India pilgrimage was over, all the devotees would leave, and he would be left alone with one or two *brahmacārīs*. He was particularly suited to translating Prabhupāda's books into Oriyā, so he asked Prabhupāda to give him someone to help manage the center.

"Where is the fat one?" asked Prabhupāda. "Bring him here." And a devotee ran out to fetch Bhāgavata. At the time the devotee found him, Bhāgavata was sitting in the visitors' tent, telling the other devotees about his plan to go to New York. When he heard Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to see him, he assumed it was in connection with the cornerstone-laying ceremony, since he was in charge. But as soon as he entered Prabhupāda's

room he sensed something heavy was about to happen.

Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled and asked Bhāgavata how he was.

"I'm fine, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

"How would you like to stay here and manage this place?"

"Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I don't really think I can stay here. It's too hard."

"Couldn't you stay here and build this building?"

"I could. But it is very difficult. And I was all set to go to New York." Bhāgavata began excitedly telling Prabhupāda about a telegram from Ādi-keśava Swami in New York inviting him to come and head an important preaching department in the temple.

"New York?" said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "They have too many men in New York already. You don't have to go to New York. You should stay here."

Bhāgavata objected; he couldn't work with Gargamuni Swami, the G.B.C. man for this area of India. Prabhupāda replied that he was sending Gargamuni to Bangladesh; he wouldn't be in charge of ISKCON in Orissa any more. Prabhupāda would personally supervise Bhāgavata.

Bhāgavata dāsa's next objection was that his health was not good, and he had to sleep a lot.

"This is a very healthy place," Prabhupāda countered. "You simply go out in the field to pass stool, then wash with your *loṭa*, and afterwards clean the *loṭa* with the mud. And you can bathe with the same *loṭa*. In this way you will stay clean and healthy."

Bhāgavata then raised his ultimate objection. "Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said, "to tell you the truth, I'm not chanting my rounds. I think I'd better go to New York, because there is good association there, and I can become strong in my regulations."

"That's all right," Prabhupāda replied. "You are working very hard. So if sometimes you aren't chanting your rounds, that's all right. As long as you are working hard, you can do your rounds at another time."

"Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Bhāgavata dāsa, "according to the *Gurvaṣṭakam*, I can understand that whenever you please the spiritual master you please Kṛṣṇa."

Prabhupāda smiled. "Yes."

"So if you want me to stay here, then I should stay."

"Yes, I want you to stay here—make life members, build this building, and help manage the place." Although Prabhupāda had laid a cornerstone for a temple, the center had no funds or donors in sight and no established congregation. All the devotees had was faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's train was to leave at 11 o'clock the next night, and

Prabhupāda sat in his little hut talking with his disciples until it was time to go. The conversation ranged from World War II politics to the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. At one point, Śrīla Prabhupāda was saying how man cannot change the laws of nature. Man should not claim that he knows something or can do something unless he can stop the miseries of birth, death, disease, and old age. "My position means my *karma*," Prabhupāda explained. "If I am in the plush Bhaktivedanta Manor, I have the same suffering as I do in this hut. If I think, 'Now I am in the Manor. I am happy,' that is foolishness. But that is how they think. Then why are they dying? They should stop that. Can you, my disciples, help me in old age? You may try your best, but you should admit it is beyond your power. But as soon as you go back home, back to Godhead, everything is solved."

He spoke about diets. Ghee was not good for him, but to eat only boiled food was like starving. He said he was capable of fasting: "If you give me nothing to eat for three days, I can do it." Gargamuni told Śrīla Prabhupāda of a man he knew in Calcutta who was healthy at ninety and who attributed his health and longevity to his strict diet of only fruits. Gargamuni suggested Prabhupāda try that diet, and Prabhupāda agreed.

Prabhupāda mentioned the diet of his spiritual master. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, he said, ate very little, but not only fruits. He liked to eat salty things, and his favorite preparation was made from chick pea flour and peanuts fried in ghee.

After the talk, when devotees were commenting about Prabhupāda's proposed fruit diet, Hari-śauri remarked affectionately, "He has said that before, but he will never do it."

On the overnight train ride to Calcutta, Prabhupāda could not rest because of two drunken men in the next compartment. Throughout the night they were howling and addressing each other, "Oh, Dr. Mukerjee!" "Oh, Mr. Chatterjee!" Prabhupāda remarked with disgust that these were the names of Bengali *brāhmaṇa* families, but that now they had become drunkards. Jagannātha Puri, he said, had been a holy place for thousands of years, but within a few years it would be so no longer. People were using Puri as a seaside resort for recreation—people like Dr. Mukerjee and Mr. Chatterjee, who had no understanding of spiritual life.

As the train pulled into Howrah Station, Prabhupāda sat for a few

minutes before disembarking. The vendors' loud cries of "*Chay! Chay!*"* punctuated the overall din of humanity and machines.

"This modern society!" Prabhupāda sighed. "It is very painful to even see their faces—they are fallen so much. By seeing their faces you become polluted. Last night they disturbed so much. And they think they are happy, they are enjoying life."

"But we have to take the risk," said Satsvarūpa, "to go and preach?"

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "If you are engaged in preaching, you are not affected. Sometimes *yogīs* go to the Himalayas just to avoid seeing the face of the vicious persons. They practice *yoga* in a sacred and solitary place. Otherwise, what is this? Simply '*Chay, chay, chay,*' and cigarette, *bidī*, talking nonsense, drinking? Yet the Vedic system is still in India. In the morning they take bath in the villages. In the cities also, at least those who come from the village. You will find in Bombay, many poor men are taking bath early in the morning. You have seen? They will wash their floor, take bath."

With fond thoughts of the pure life in the Vedic village, Śrīla Prabhupāda left the station, passing through the crowds and the noise. He knew Calcutta well, better than any of his disciples. The poverty, chaos, and political slogans did not phase him. It was his hometown. But he had no mundane connections there. He was coming only for a few days—to preach. Then on to Mayāpur.

Mayāpur

February 7, 1977

More than eighty Bengali *gurukula* boys, along with some one hundred other devotees, greeted Prabhupāda with a *kīrtana* at the front gate of the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir. The entire ISKCON land seemed to be blooming with flowers, and the freshly painted temple building shone like the first reddish rays of dawn. The new building, a long residential building, was almost completed. "Back to home, back to Godhead," Prabhupāda said softly, as his car entered the gate and slowly proceeded toward the temple.

He was arriving three weeks before hundreds of devotees from all over the world were scheduled to come and be with him for the celebration

* "*Tea! Tea!*"

of Gaura-pūrṇimā, the appearance day of Lord Caitanya. Bhavananda Goswami and Jayapātāka Swami, Śrīla Prabhupāda's leaders of ISKCON Mayāpur, ushered him through the crowd of *gurukula* boys and devotees up to the Deity room, where he beheld and bowed before the shining, golden forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

Later, while sitting in his room on the second floor, Śrīla Prabhupāda complimented the devotees for making the grounds so beautiful and clean. Hundreds of flowers decorated his room like a gorgeous garden. "These flowers are your first success," said Prabhupāda. He sat back, relaxed with the special pleasure and satisfaction he felt when in the atmosphere of his beloved Mayāpur. "For Kṛṣṇa's service," he said, "you submit some plan, and He's very glad. We want some flower for Kṛṣṇa's service, and Kṛṣṇa is supplying. *Everything* we want for Kṛṣṇa, not for our sense gratification. For Kṛṣṇa we can endeavor multifariously—that is the contribution of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that prior to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, the Vaiṣṇavas used to live retired lives in Vṛndāvana—no preaching. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was the first to demonstrate how pure devotees can preach in sophisticated ways, even living in big buildings and utilizing automobiles in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

"People may be envious that these devotees are living in palatial buildings," said Prabhupāda, "but Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said only the devotees shall live in palatial buildings. *Only* devotees. Just like government servants are given the best places to live in. Similarly, those who are devotees, they should be given all facilities. Not extravagancy, not luxury, but nice food, nice place, nice facilities—and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. This is our mission. This is not dry. Especially you coming from America and Europe, you are not accustomed to the hardships of Indian people. You must have the bare necessities of comfort, and serve Kṛṣṇa. This I am trying to do and utilize."

Prabhupāda thanked the devotees present for working in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he reiterated his familiar formula that American brains and American money combined with Indian culture could turn the whole world into a heaven.

Later, Śrīla Prabhupāda went to oversee the new building, the longest building in West Bengal, Jayapātāka Swami said—more than seven hundred feet. Śrīla Prabhupāda said it looked like a train. He inspected all the rooms one by one and emphasized that they must be ready in time

for the festival Walking along the veranda he remarked, “Oh, it is just like Fifth Avenue.”

The next few days were quiet Prabhupāda would sit taking his massage in the late morning on the roof amid hundreds of potted plants Leaning on the rail of the veranda outside his room one day, he looked down onto the lawn where one of the women was picking flowers for the Deities “This is temple,” he said, “—always something going on And with each flower picked, she advances in spiritual life a little more” Prabhupada particularly liked that the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir was always being expanded and improved He liked to look out from the veranda and see guests arriving, devotees working, and new plans manifesting

But Prabhupāda’s ill health persisted—an imbalance of *pitta* and *vāyu* (bile and air), he said One morning when his servant asked him how he felt, he replied, “Very bad” But sometimes after a “very bad” morning, he would feel much better

The devotees did not think of Prabhupāda’s illness in a material way, but it caused them anxiety Over the years he had gone through various health crises, and the devotees knew these illnesses were transcendental, directly controlled by Kṛṣṇa In 1974, when he had been very ill in Vrndavana, he had said that the cause was his disciples’ not strictly following the rules and principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness His disciples knew they had to strictly follow his orders if they actually cared for his health He would go on taking risks—accepting more disciples, traveling and preaching—but his disciples had to avoid acting in ways that would disturb his health Mostly the devotees preferred to think that Prabhupāda’s health would soon improve And Śrīla Prabhupada himself did not dwell on the subject, he was too absorbed in spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement

A few days after his arrival, Śrīla Prabhupāda journeyed by car and ferry to Navadvīpa to visit the *asrama* of his Godbrother Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja But while walking up the steep stone steps, Prabhupāda’s legs suddenly gave way, and he collapsed Fortunately, Hariśauri was close enough to catch him It was the second time Prabhupāda had collapsed in less than two weeks Both times he had been actively preaching, and both times he had continued on his way with no mention of what had happened

In Bhubaneswar, Śrīla Prabhupāda had promised Svarūpa Dāmodara he would go to Manipur with him after the Māyapur festival Manipur,

~~an independent country~~ of India, was mentioned in the Vedic literature, Prabhupāda said. Arjuna's wife Citrāṅgadā had come from Manipur, and it had been ruled by Kṛṣṇa conscious *kṣatriyas*. Now Śrīla Prabhupāda, encouraged by Svarūpa Dāmodara, who was born and raised in Manipur, was eager to go and try to revive a Kṛṣṇa conscious state there. But with his weakening health, he questioned whether he should travel.

Hari-śauri, who had been with Prabhupāda continually for eighteen months, felt that Prabhupāda's health was not likely to improve. And in one sense, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was spreading so widely under Prabhupāda's direction that it was perhaps not so necessary for Prabhupāda to travel, at least not with the extraordinary expenditure of energy and strength that he had been displaying for the last ten years. Maybe he could retire from traveling. Even during the previous summer, when he had been traveling in the United States, he had once remarked that he simply wanted to go there to become encouraged by how well his devotees were managing everything by themselves. He used to say that he had laid the foundation and erected the framework for the building of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement; now his followers simply had to fill it in. He would often say he had injected medicine into the system of materialistic society; now it would spread and act. He also said he had ignited the fire that would now rage around the world. Therefore, although he was always anxious for his movement, he had confidence.

One morning just after breakfast, Prabhupāda was on his veranda looking out across the land of Māyāpur. Turning to Hari-śauri, he said, "Actually it does not matter even if I die immediately. I have given the basis for everything, and now if they simply manage things nicely and follow whatever programs I have begun, then everything will be successful." Hari-śauri was disturbed to hear such statements, and he remained speechless. Then Prabhupāda added, "But still I would like to finish this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's stay at ISKCON Māyāpur had been quiet, but as the G.B.C. men began arriving from the West, he heard the latest news of the fierce opposition to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in America. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Brahmānanda Swami, coming from New York, reported that the case in which Ādi-keśava Swami was being charged with mind control was heard later in March and that the judge had given Ādi-keśava

permission to come and see Śrīla Prabhupāda. They also told Prabhupāda that several other devotees had been kidnapped and that, in some cases, parents had secured legal conservatorship through judges to abduct the devotees.

"What is the complaint of the opposing party?" asked Prabhupāda. Again, as when he had argued with Rāmeśvara Swami, he defended the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement while his disciples fired materialistic arguments at him. It was not just an exercise; he was training his disciples. He had to answer any arguments that had discouraged or weakened them. And beyond that, he was actually the ultimate defender of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"They say we are zombies," said Brahmānanda.

"Zombies?" Prabhupāda asked. "What is that?"

"Zombies," said Hari-śauri. "Like a robot. We have no brain. We are like machines. They say we have no freedom of choice."

"Children have got also the same thing," replied Prabhupāda. "But the father stops. Children want to play; they do not like to go to school. Father does not like it. Is that father's attempt to check the child's freedom? Every father is doing that. The government is doing that. Why the government is checking criminals?"

Prabhupāda was interested to hear other news, and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami reported on the new ISKCON farm in Pennsylvania and on the restaurant in New York City. Brahmānanda Swami talked about their new farm in Africa, and both he and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa gave their impression of things at Hare Krishna Land in Bombay and reported on Gopāla Kṛṣṇa's progress in printing Prabhupāda's books in various Indian languages.

"So this is the thing that is starting to happen now," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "They are lobbying in the Congress of the United States to pass laws that if someone is abnormal then the parents should have the right to commit him to psychological treatments. Even though the child may be fifty years old and the parents seventy years old, if the parents think that the child is not sane, then they have the right to have the child committed."

"This is very dangerous," said Prabhupāda.

They told Prabhupāda of a devotee who had been kidnapped while distributing books at an airport. The court had given the girl's parents legal authority to have her confined for thirty days in a special center in Arizona run by deprogrammers. They also told him that among the lobbyists advocating kidnapping were powerful groups of Christians and Jews, who had become active because they saw that other movements, not

only the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, were taking young people away from the religion of their parents. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested that a probable result of ISKCON's court case in New York would be to establish ISKCON as bona fide. Defenders of civil rights in America were alarmed at the threat to constitutional liberties, and therefore the court case was generating great interest. It was a test of freedom of religion. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa told Prabhupāda it was the biggest test case of the decade, and that the American Civil Liberties Union had taken it as one of their main priorities.

"Two states have passed laws making this deprogramming legal," said Brahmānanda Swami. "And they also give tax exemption. That means the government is giving support."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "They are afraid that these Kṛṣṇa conscious men may capture the government."

"Yes," agreed Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, "some of them are saying that the Kṛṣṇa conscious organization is very powerful and that our ambition is to take over the world."

Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed. "That's a fact. Well, let us see. It is a fight between Kṛṣṇa and demon. Let us do our duty and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa; everything will be all right. There were so many demons. Prahlaḍa Mahārāja was five-years-old boy, and his father was such a big demon. But still Prahlaḍa Mahārāja was victorious. Similarly, you are all like Prahlaḍa Mahārāja. The fight is there. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Depend on Kṛṣṇa. You will come out victorious. Nṛsiṃhadeva will come. So the 'poison' of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is acting now. That is good. If we come out victorious, that will be a great victory."

As they spoke, the electricity went off, and Prabhupāda's room, as well as the rest of the building, was in darkness. Within a few moments a devotee entered with a kerosene lantern. Prabhupāda began to reminisce, saying that electricity had been introduced in India when he was a young boy. At first not every house could afford electricity, he said, and if a man had a good gas light in his house, he was considered rich. He said the street lamps were carbon arc, and the man who changed the carbon rods would throw the used ones in the street. "When the carbon would be changed," said Prabhupāda, "they would throw, and we children would collect them."

"What would you do with them?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed and said, "Play—'We have collected something.' So electricity was introduced in our life when we were ten or twelve."

"But still you were able to read," said Brahmānanda.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "with this lantern." He recalled that his father

would purchase kerosene for the lanterns. His father was not rich, but by buying and stocking things in quantity, he used to amply provide for his family. Life was simple then, Prabhupāda concluded, but civilized.

The *sannyāsīs* began telling Prabhupāda about how a military dictatorship had taken over in Argentina and had officially banned the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Twenty thousand dollars' worth of books had been seized, and devotees had been arrested. Many other persons were being regularly arrested or shot in the streets.

"Things are deteriorating everywhere," said Prabhupāda.

"Very quickly," added Brahmānanda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "So this will give impetus to Kṛṣṇa consciousness—*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glāṇih*.* Don't be disappointed. Kṛṣṇa will act through His movement and kill them, these demons. How it will be done, that you cannot know now, but it will be done. Let us remain true soldiers. That's all. And suppose you die in the fight? Fight means with vow, with determination either to gain victory or die. Because it is a fight against *māyā*. Why you shall be afraid of being killed? When there is a fight, one must know that, 'Either I'm going to be killed or gain victory.' *Jīva vā mara vā*. Those who are devotees, either they live or they die, it's the same thing. While they live they are serving Kṛṣṇa. When they die they will serve Kṛṣṇa. *Jīva vā mara vā. Tyaktvā deham punar janma naiti mām eti*. † He goes to Kṛṣṇa. So what is the loss? We are working for Kṛṣṇa, and if we die we go to Kṛṣṇa. What is the loss?

A few days later Ādi-keśava Swami arrived in Māyāpur to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. Ādi-keśava was only twenty-three years old, and all these things were creating a great strain upon him. Against his lawyer's advice, he had come to India in desperation, to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. For the preliminary hearings he had worn a business suit and a regular haircut, but now he appeared before Śrīla Prabhupāda with shaven head and saffron robes. Other *sonnyāsīs* had also arrived, and they all gathered in Prabhupāda's room, eager to get his direction.

"This movement is not brainwashing," Prabhupāda began, "we are brain-giving. First of all you must have brain. Then there is a question of washing. But you have no brain. You do not know what is this life. You

* Lord Kṛṣṇa appears when religious principles are disturbed (*Bhagavad gītā* 4.7)

† At the time of death the Kṛṣṇa conscious person goes to Kṛṣṇa (*Bhagavad gītā* 4.9)

cannot explain what is the difference between a dead man and a living man. You have got so many big, big scientists and philosophers, but you do not know. So where is your brain? First of all prove your brain. Then there can be a question of washing. It is not brainwashing. It is brain-giving movement. Unfortunately, you have no brain. Therefore you misunderstand. On this point the *Bhagavad-gītā* will explain. What do you think? Brainwashing or brain-giving?"

"Yes," said Ādi-keśava, "this is good." Prabhupāda said the devotees should consult among themselves, write an essay, and send it to the court. His main point was that most people could not understand the simple truth of the soul. They are in need of knowledge, and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is giving essential knowledge of the soul. Therefore it is a brain-giving movement.

Ādi-keśava took the role of the antagonists. "Well," he said, "I have a brain, and it is functioning. Otherwise, how could I be speaking to you now? How could I even answer you?"

"But that speaking and the dog's barking are the same thing," said Prabhupāda. "The dog is barking. What is the difference? He is speaking in a different language, that's all. The dog is barking, and you are speaking. What is the difference?"

Ādi-keśava: "But they say, 'We have art. We have science.'"

"Whatever you may have," Prabhupāda replied, "you cannot answer the ultimate question."

Arguments flew back and forth, as other devotees in the room challenged Prabhupāda's logic. But Prabhupāda stuck to his main point. If a man doesn't know the difference between a dead man and a living man, if he doesn't know the soul, then he has no brain. When the devotees mentioned faith in scripture, Prabhupāda said that he was not arguing on the basis of scripture, but on logic. Whatever arguments they raised, Prabhupāda strongly defeated. There was no trace of illness or weakness in Prabhupāda's demeanor as he drilled his men on how to defend by aggressive argument.

"They say that this discussion is beyond our intelligence," said Ādi-keśava.

"If you say beyond your intelligence," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "that means you have no brain."

In Prabhupāda's association, Ādi-keśava gained strength and conviction. "They complain," said Ādi-keśava, "that if one becomes a devotee, he suffers from loss of identity. But actually, they don't know who they are. So we will challenge them like that, 'What is this loss of identity?'"

You don't even know who you are. So you have nothing to lose.' "

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, with great spirit. "What is your identification? *That* you do not know. We are teaching that by identifying yourself with this body, you have lost your identity."

"Most of their charges," said Ādi-keśava, "are based on misconceptions about our movement. For instance, they say that we do not eat enough or sleep enough. Yet we have studies from their own scientists that say our diet is good."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "How we are living if our diet is not good? Ten years we are eating insufficiently? Then how we are living? You do not know what is good food, but the result you have to know. A cow eats so much grass, and a human being eats a small plateful. If the cow says, 'You are not eating sufficient like *me*,' is that logic?"

"No," said Ādi-keśava, "it is not logic."

Prabhupāda: "So you are just like cows and asses. You eat voraciously. Does it mean I have to eat voraciously?"

"But what proof is there?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami. "They may argue for proof of the soul."

"This is proof," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Now if the real active principle has left, if you can understand it, then replace it. Replace life. If you cannot, then you have no brain." Prabhupāda argued that at death, although the parts of a body remained, something was missing.

"But you have not seen that something," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"See it or not," said Prabhupāda, "I can see. Why this man is dead? Something is missing."

"Well," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "it's just like a machine."

Śrīla Prabhupāda became fiery. "A machine you can replace! Why don't you bring a new body and replace the dead one? Therefore you have no brain! It is a completely different thing!"

Prabhupāda said this philosophy of the soul should be presented in court. "It will be very interesting," he said. "The case will prolong, and we can disclose our whole philosophy. Is it not? Think deeply, over and over, and fight. Tell them, 'What is your seeing? You cannot see beyond this wall. Does it mean there is nothing? Why depend on your seeing, rascal? You are being brainless.' I take it as a good opportunity for describing our whole philosophy. Don't take it as otherwise. Rather, prove yourself sufficient in this subject matter. This is a trial examination."

The devotees told Prabhupāda how critics were examining the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and trying to find fault with the devotees in the basis of their philosophy. They were challenged in court about Prabhupāda's statement

that man had not gone to the moon.

"I personally did not go with you," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "So how shall I believe? From the practical point of view, I did not go. It is just some news, so why should I accept it? They believe some paper, that's all. So why shall we not believe the Vedic literatures? Vedic literature is so authoritative. It has been accepted by the *ācāryas*."

Next the devotees began talking about how the parents and deprogrammers justified their use of force. "This clouds the issue in the courtroom," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, "because everyone naturally feels very sympathetic toward the fathers and mothers."

"Why don't you quote from our *sāstra*," replied Śrīla Prabhupāda, "that he is not father—*pitā na so syāt*. Find this verse."

Pradyumna had the book off the shelf and his finger on the verse within a few seconds. He read, *gurur na so syāt svajano na so syāt, pitā na sa syāj jonant no sā syāt/ doivam na tat syān no patiś co so syān, na mocayed yah samupeta-mṛtyum*. "One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, husband, mother, or worshipable demigod."

"So how is he the father?" asked Prabhupāda. "What is the purport?"

Ādi-keśava Swami: "They argue sometimes that—"

"You will argue your point," interrupted Prabhupāda, "but our point is there. We shall argue from our point of view. Unless the father releases the son from the cycle of birth and death, he is not father."

Śrīla Prabhupāda never let up, and finally he concluded, "If you try to advise a rascal, he will be angry. So this is the position. Still, we have to do our business. What can be done? Difficult task. Therefore, if you want to please Kṛṣṇa very quickly, struggle for preaching: *ya idam paramam guhyam mad-bhakteṣu abhidhāsyati*. So we have got our business, to please Kṛṣṇa. That is our mission. So despite so many inconveniences, we have to do this business. *Mūdho 'yam nābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam*.* They are all *mūdhas*. So we have been engaged to teach them some lesson."

Later, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke privately and in more detail with Ādi-

* "I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My eternal creative potency [*yugamāyā*], and so the deluded world knows Me not, who am unborn and infallible" (*Bhagavad gītā* 7.25)

keśava Swami. "They told me that you had grown your hair," said Prabhupāda. Ādi-keśava admitted it was so but that he couldn't do it any more. He said he wanted to go to court proudly and say that he was Prabhupāda's son and proud of being a devotee. Prabhupāda said that was also his desire, that Ādi-keśava go into court in *sannyāsa* dress and carrying his *sannyāsa-daṇḍa*. He should have *tilaka* and a shaved head, and he should preach. Śrīla Prabhupāda told how people had advised him to wear Western dress when he had first come to America. Ādi-keśava had received recent letters from Prabhupāda, but now Prabhupāda told him face to face to bring all of the books into court and introduce them as evidence. He should boldly preach.

Ādi-keśava mentioned that an official in the Indian Embassy had said that the Indian government would give him asylum if necessary. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased to hear this. When Ādi-keśava admitted that he was sometimes discouraged and alone in the prolonged legal struggle, Prabhupāda said he could take other men with him to help. But the main backing Ādi-keśava required was from Śrīla Prabhupāda; he wanted Prabhupāda's mercy. And Prabhupāda, like a father, gave solace and courage to his young, rather frail-looking son who was going into battle. Don't be afraid, Prabhupāda said. Repeatedly he would call Ādi-keśava to his room to give him more mercy: another logical argument, an instruction on how he should act in court. Prabhupāda's essential advice, of which Ādi-keśava was now aware and convinced, was that he should preach; Kṛṣṇa would protect him.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa replaced Satsvarūpa as Prabhupāda's secretary. Early in the morning, on Satsvarūpa's last day of duty, Śrīla Prabhupāda called him in just after dictating his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses and purports and told him that for breakfast he wanted cucumber, soaked mung *dāl*, and fruits. He said he had just dictated some verses and purports dealing with transmigration, and he rewound the tape and played back the dictation: philosophical arguments of Kṛṣṇa's father, Vasudeva, trying to convince Kāṁsa about the eternality of the soul. Vasudeva argued that at death the soul changes from one body to another, just as a man walking down the street places one foot in front of the other. And Prabhupāda, while listening, demonstrated by "walking" with two fingers across the dictating machine.

Prabhupāda's dictation continued:

At the present moment there is great opposition to the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, which is being called a "brainwashing" movement. But actually the so-called scientists, philosophers, and other leaders in the Western countries have no brains at all. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is trying to elevate such foolish persons by enlightening their intelligence so that they will take advantage of the human body. Unfortunately, because of gross ignorance they regard the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement as a brainwashing movement. They do not know that without God consciousness one is forced to continue transmigrating from one body to another.

Now the very same arguments that Prabhupāda had spoken to the *san-nyāsis* were immortalized in the Bhaktivedanta purports. In the future, after the court case had been finished and mostly forgotten, Prabhupāda's true assessment of the situation would prevail.

On February 22, three hundred fifty devotees arrived on a Boeing 747 Air-India jet at Dumdum Airport in Calcutta. The special flight, all devotees, had flown from Los Angeles to New York to London, picking up more devotees at each stop. As it was the first landing of a 747 in Calcutta, the mayor, local militia, leading Air-India dignitaries, and media people were on hand to greet the historic flight. One of the devotees told a reporter that the Boeing 747's coming from the West to Calcutta was the mercy of Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Ten busloads of devotees then rode to Mayāpur.

Soon the Mayapur Chandrodāya Mandir was teeming with transcendental activity; the Gaura-pūrnīmā festival was in full swing. The Vaikunṭha Players of New York staged an evening theater performance of the *Rāmāyana*, and Śrīla Prabhupāda attended. The audience watched and appreciated Śrīla Prabhupāda almost as much as they did the play.

On the opening night of the *paṇḍal*, a government minister attended to officially inaugurate the festivities. He cut a ribbon to open the new building, and he and Śrīla Prabhupāda walked together down the long first-floor corridor and viewed a photo display of ISKCON centers around the world. Halfway down the corridor Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped, shook his head, and said, "It is all inconceivable." The minister was also amazed at the

scale on which Śrīla Prabhupāda was propagating Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda and his guest went onto the stage. The minister gave an introductory speech, glorifying a well-known impersonalist *svāmī*, referring to him as a divine incarnation. He also slighted the name of Lord Caitanya by saying that although he didn't know whether Caitanya Mahāprabhu was an incarnation, he knew He had certainly done good in the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke next, using scriptural evidence to correct the erroneous opinions the minister had given in his talk. Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke in Bengali, and most of his disciples could not understand, but they could appreciate the gist. Later, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting in his room with a few devotees, he began laughing. Smacking his fist into his left palm, he said, "I have smashed him."

With Gaura-pūrṇimā only about a week away, thousands of Bengali pilgrims were attending the ISKCON center each night. They streamed into the temple room for *kīrtana* and *darśana* of Rādhā-Mādhava and then went to see the ISKCON photo exhibit. It was the biggest and best organized Māyāpur festival ever. Despite the opposition in America, Lord Caitanya's movement was flooding the world with the waves of *saṅkīrtana*, and this gathering of more than five hundred devotees from every continent was a powerful testimony to the good health of the growing Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Rāmeśvara Swami returned with the latest figures of Prabhupāda's book production. In the English language alone Śrīla Prabhupāda had published 43,450,500 pieces of literature. And the total production of Prabhupāda's books in twenty-three languages, including Russian, was 55,314,000, more than ninety percent of which had already been distributed. Rāmeśvara also presented Śrīla Prabhupāda with a new book just off the press, the Ninth Canto, Part One, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Rādhāvallabha reported that the next printing of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* would be so large that the paper required to print it would have to be carried on seventy-six train cars. Prabhupāda and the devotees laughed at the astounding figures.

Prabhupāda thanked the devotees for their hard work. "This is the blessing of my Guru Mahārāja," he said. "He wanted it. And because we are trying to do this, he is giving us all blessings."

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to be very active: encouraging devotees, writing, preaching. Soon after the busloads of devotees arrived, however,

came very ill again. His busy schedule became a strain, but he
 sued.

The G.B.C. men began their annual three days of meetings, and each
 day they would meet with Prabhupāda. He heard their proposals and
 making some corrections, approved them. The final item on the
 list of resolutions was that all ISKCON temples hold twenty-four
kr̥tana, in view of Prabhupāda's sickness. The devotees had also
 this in 1974 when Prabhupāda had been ill. "Yes," Prabhupāda said
 he heard the resolution, "chanting is the only cure for all diseases."
 On Gaura-pūrṇima, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted more than two hundred
 disciples for first initiation, and he awarded second initiation to one hun-
 dred disciples. Huge crowds poured through the front gate all day; and
 at four PM. until late at night, the roads would be packed and the *kr̥t*-
 nas would attract large receptive audiences.

In the afternoon Śrīla Prabhupāda received Tarun Kanti Ghosh, the
 minister for Bengal, also in charge of the state police force.
 Prabhupāda spoke with Mr. Ghosh in his room and found him very
 favorable toward ISKCON and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy.
 Śrīla Prabhupāda had decided to stay on in Mayāpur instead of ac-
 companying the devotees to Vṇḍāvana for the second half of the festival,
 some of the leaders came to his room to pay their respects before depart-
 ing. When Harikeśa Swami and Ādi-keśava Swami entered together,
 Prabhupāda told Harikeśa that because the people in the Communist coun-
 tries were suffering so much, he should give them books without making
 them pay. Turning to Ādi-keśava, he said he had placed much responsibility
 on Ādi-keśava's thin shoulders but that he should be victorious. "So you
 Harikeśa and Ādi-keśava," he said, "the Keśa brothers. So go and
 teach. Be successful." Śrīla Prabhupāda similarly spoke lovingly with
 the other G.B.C. men as they departed for their assigned areas around the
 world.

Within a few days, Mayāpur was again quiet, with very few visiting
 devotees remaining.

Almost two weeks later, while Śrīla Prabhupāda was still in Mayāpur,
 the news of the New York court decision appeared on the front page of
 the *Times of India*. On receiving it, Tamala Kṛṣṇa Goswami immediately

brought a copy to Prabhupāda in his room and, at Prabhupāda's request, read it out loud

HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT IS BONA FIDE RELIGION

Washington, March 18

The Hare Krishna movement was called a "bona fide religion" yesterday by the New York High Court Justice who threw out two charges against the officials of the movement of "illegal imprisonment" and "attempted extortion" The charge had been preferred by an angry parent that his son, as well as another disciple, had been held by the movement illegally and that they had been brainwashed "The entire and basic issue before the court," said the Justice in dismissing the charges, "is whether the two alleged victims in this case and the defendants will be allowed to practice the religion of their choice and this must be answered with a resounding affirmative." Said Mr Justice John Leahy, "the Hare Krishna movement is a bona fide religion with roots in India that go back thousands of years. It behooved Merril Kreshower and Edward Shapiro to follow the tenets of that faith and their inalienable right to do so will not be trampled upon The separation of church and state must be maintained We must remain a nation of laws, not of man The presentment and indictment by the Grand Jury was in direct and blatant violation of the defendant's constitutional rights" The Justice said that it appeared to the court, "The people rest their case on an erroneous minor premise to arrive at a fallacious conclusion The record is devoid of one specific allegation of a misrepresentation or any act of deception on the part of any defendant" The Justice said, "The freedom of religion is not to be abridged because it is unconventional in beliefs and practices or because it is approved or disapproved by the mainstream of society or more conventional religions Without this proliferation and freedom to follow the dictates of one's own conscience in this search of approach to God, the freedom of religion will be a meaningless right as provided for in the constitution In the attempt, be it direct, well intentioned or not presents a clear and present danger to this most fundamental basis and eternally needed right of our citizens—freedom of religion" The Hare Krishna movement has been under pressure from various groups and this judgment is expected to stop some of the harassment in which it has been subjected in recent months

"My mission is now successful," said Śrīla Prabhupāda "In 1965 I

went there. This is now recognized after twelve years. I was loitering in the street alone, carrying the books. Nobody cared."

Svarūpa Dāmodara was present, and he spoke with Prabhupāda about the Bhaktivedanta Institute and about preaching in Manipur. And other matters came before Prabhupāda's attention. But he kept coming back to the news from New York. "Our most auspicious sign is this," said Prabhupāda, "—'Hare Krishna Movement Is Bona Fide Religion.'"

Śrīla Prabhupāda's plans were to move to Bombay. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami said a lot of senior devotees were gathering in Bombay. They had gone there from Vṛndāvana and were waiting for Prabhupāda. "I am, therefore, going," said Prabhupāda, "in spite of my so much inconveniences. I am going there."

"You want to stay in Bombay?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "How long?"

"I don't want to stay anywhere," said Prabhupāda. "I want to work. Staying—I have stayed in big, big palaces, big, big cities. I have no other desire but to work."

"How long do you want to work in Bombay?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"So long as there is work," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "There is no end of it. Our Bombay should be organized. Work is our life. There is no question of how long. As long as possible. Kṛṣṇa is giving us good opportunities. Now we should take it seriously. It is not a joke—'Hare Krishna Movement Is Bona Fide Religion.'"

The devotees discussed before Prabhupāda the significance of the court decision. They also appreciated the judge and said that he was a senior man in the courts and was considered conservative. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that he should be sent a letter of congratulations: "May God bless you for such right judgment. Live long life to serve God."

"Honest and sincere people normally appreciate our movement," said Svarūpa Dāmodara. "Only those who are envious—"

"Envious we don't care about," Prabhupāda interjected. "We don't care, never care about. I didn't care—many times, even my Godbrothers. Neither do I care just now. I'll go on with my work. Why care? We are doing our duty, that's all—under the higher authoritative order. Have no fear. It is not personal gratification. So arrange for Manipur. We shall go."

Svarūpa Dāmodara said he would go to Delhi and try to arrange permits for entry, but that it would be hard, since most foreigners were not allowed to enter Manipur. He said that after doing his business, he would come to Bombay and see Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"Now work very strenuously," said Prabhupāda. "You are all young

men. And somehow or other, to a dead horse you have given life. The last fortnight I was thinking I was dead. I was thinking like that—now life is finished. I can be finished at any time—that is not amazing. To live, that is amazing. My life is finished—that is not amazing. No one will lament. ‘Oh, he was old man, eighty-two years old.’ But if I can live for some days more, that is wonderful. If I die that is not wonderful.”

“Kṛṣṇa is wonderful,” said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami.

“Kṛṣṇa is wonderful always,” said Prabhupāda.

“And you are wonderful,” said Bhavānanda Goswami.

“I am wonderful,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda, “as long as I serve Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, useless, no value. If I can serve Kṛṣṇa, then I am wonderful, certainly.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued declaring that Kṛṣṇa was the most wonderful and could do anything. That he was alive and still active, he said, attested to Kṛṣṇa’s being wonderful. “If Kṛṣṇa is not wonderful,” he said, “is it possible for me to do all these things? Who am I? We don’t want to become cheaply wonderful. We want to become really wonderful, by serving Kṛṣṇa. That is our mission. Kṛṣṇa is wonderful undoubtedly. Who can become more wonderful than Kṛṣṇa? *Mataḥ parataram nānyat*. Always remember, Kṛṣṇa is wonderful. Don’t take Kṛṣṇa very slightly, like one of you. That is foolishness. Kṛṣṇa is wonderful always. He is the most wonderful person, and He can do anything wonderful.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to make appreciative remarks about the judge’s decision. He said he had feared the case might have taken fourteen years, and yet it had not even taken fourteen hours. Kṛṣṇa was so wonderful.

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March 22

The senior devotees in Mayāpur felt Śrīla Prabhupāda was too ill to travel and that he should remain there and recuperate. Besides, reports from Bombay were conflicting. Surabhi Swami, knowing that Prabhupāda’s quarters weren’t finished, wanted more time, so he wired Prabhupāda, requesting him not to come. But Girirāja and others had been arranging a lecture program for Śrīla Prabhupāda at a *paṇḍal* in Azad Maidan in Bombay, and Girirāja had written inviting Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda considered the opportunities for preaching and decided to go. He had his

secretary send a telegram from Māyāpur to Bombay.

**PRABHUPĀDA ARRIVING TUESDAY AT 1350 HAVE ROOMS
READY IN WHATEVER CONDITION.**

But on Prabhupāda's arrival in Bombay, he was so weak that he could not walk down the steep stairs from the airplane, and airline personnel arranged for him to be lowered to the ground by hydraulic lift. Once he was on the ground, several devotees assisted him in walking. Although he appeared frail, he smiled brightly when he saw the devotees waiting for him at the airport.

In the car Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired about the Bombay temple, and Hari-śauri informed him that his quarters were not yet ready, with no toilet, no running water, no doors or windows, and the workmen polishing the floors. Prabhupāda dismissed these objections and said he would move in anyway. The devotees who knew the state of the building became extremely anxious. It didn't seem possible that anyone could live there. But Prabhupāda said he would.

Hari-śauri said he was surprised Prabhupāda had decided to travel, and Prabhupāda replied, "Yes, even up to last night, there was no chance of my coming. But still, somehow or other, we are here." Prabhupāda was traveling and preaching because that was his life. For more than thirty years he had been spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement—first in India and then in America and throughout the world. As long as Kṛṣṇa gave him even a little strength, he would continue. He wanted to hold the public lectures in the city, and he wanted to observe the progress of the construction at Hare Kṛṣṇa Land, his grandest temple. Even though the temple was not completed, he would move in and show the devotees how to use it.

As they drove up to the entrance to Hare Kṛṣṇa Land, Prabhupāda could see the tall towers of the ISKCON hotel and the incomplete hut massive domes of the temple. These huge structures dwarfed the little shed that was the temporary residence of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsavihārī. The Deities had been in that shed since 1971, when Prabhupāda had moved Them there, with a promise that he would build Them a beautiful temple. And now, after much difficulty and struggle, that promise was soon to be fulfilled. Rādhā-Rāsavihārī would soon move into one of the most gorgeous and opulent temples in India.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Land was intense with activity as some two hundred

workers plied their various skills in constructing the temple hotel complex, under the direction of Surabhi Swami and his assistants. A dozen men were cutting redstone slabs to cover the concrete superstructure of the hotel, almost fifty marble workers were chipping away with hammers, making decorative columns and arches in the temple, and masons and interior finishers were working on the theater building. Much of the work was completed, yet everything still appeared bare, like bones without flesh. The hotel had no windows or doors and, of course, no furniture or curtains, and the temple was mostly an unfinished structure.

The work crews were moving quickly, concentrating especially on Śrīla Prabhupada's quarters on the top floor of one of the hotel towers. But even that was not ready, so Citrakara, as ordered by Surabhi Swami and Giriraja, drove Prabhupada's car past the hotel to the rear of the property, to where Prabhupada usually stayed, in an apartment in one of the old tenement buildings.

Devotees were waiting at Śrīla Prabhupada's tenement room in happy anticipation. They were prepared with paraphernalia to perform a foot bathing ceremony and *arati*, and they had spent most of the day cleaning the rooms, which were decorated with lily garlands and scented with incense. A group of devotees stood outside the building with *mrdangas* and *karatalas* holding *kirtana* and some of the *brahmacharins* were poised, ready to throw flower petals before Śrīla Prabhupada when he walked from his car and up the stairs. But Śrīla Prabhupada was in a different mood. "I will never again go into this apartment," he said. "Take me to my new quarters." Citrakara repeated what Śrīla Prabhupada had already heard. "Your quarters aren't ready yet, Śrīla Prabhupada. It will take a few more days to finish."

"Call Surabhi Maharaja," said Śrīla Prabhupada. He was adamant. The devotees in the apartment and in front of the tenement wondered why Śrīla Prabhupada wasn't getting out of his car. As Citrakara was driving Prabhupada back to the hotel, Surabhi came running up behind.

"Why are my quarters not ready?" Prabhupada asked from the car window. Running to catch up, Surabhi explained that he needed a few more days and that Śrīla Prabhupada could please stay at his old apartment in the meantime.

"You do what I say!" shouted Prabhupada. The car stopped. "If I don't go there now," Prabhupada said, still speaking loudly, "it will never be finished. I want to go *now*!"

"Yes, Śrīla Prabhupada." And Surabhi ran off to see if he could get

the elevator to work. Meanwhile, the assembled devotees, having heard the news, also ran to be with Prabhupāda as he entered his new quarters.

Śrīla Prabhupāda felt his time was limited, and if he was not insistent, his disciples would delay more and more. He had already been delayed for years by the landowner and the government. Even after he had purchased the land, the police commissioner had remarked that the *kr̥tana* was "a nuisance" and had delayed construction for months by denying the No-Objection Certificate. But despite so many delays, Prabhupāda had persisted and won. No, he wouldn't go back to the old place. Now the new Bombay temple should come to life—now that he had come.

The elevator didn't work. The devotees, therefore, carried Prabhupāda in a palanquin up the stairs to his fifth-floor apartment. The place was cluttered, and the floor was covered with a thick, greasy marble polish the workers were using. The dozen workers present were confused—why was their work being interrupted? The devotees rushed in with drums, *kamṭālas*, and *ārati* paraphernalia, but just stood around, not knowing what to do. The room was bare, with no furniture, desk, or sitting place.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, looked around at the chaotic scene and said, "I am going to sit down here." A devotee took off a woolen *cadar* and placed it on the floor in an isolated dry part of the room, and Śrīla Prabhupāda sat down. "Now you can do what you like," he said.

While some of the devotees began washing the floor, others ran to find servicable pieces of furniture to provide Śrīla Prabhupāda with a desk, seat, and bed. Surabhi Swami nervously bathed Prabhupāda's feet and then offered *dm̐ti*, while devotees sang *śrī guru-carana-padma* and tried not to slip on the greasy floor. Surveying the scene with a satisfied look, Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled broadly and said, "Thank you very much."

When the welcoming function was complete, Śrīla Prabhupāda was left alone with his secretaries. He said his quarters were to his liking. He spent the night there, but the next day agreed to move for a week to the home of Mr. Kartikeya Mahadevia. For a week he would attend the Bombay *paṇḍal* program, which was near Mr. Mahadevia's home, and this would give Surabhi Swami enough time to get the quarters ready.

Śrīla Prabhupāda could not stand and walk without assistance. From Mr. Mahadevia's house the devotees would carry him on a palanquin to the car, from the car they would carry him to the room behind the *paṇḍal* lecture platform, and from there onto the stage, where Bhavānanda

Goswami would help him onto the *vyāsōsano*.

Compared to former *pandāl* festivals, where sometimes thirty thousand people had gathered in one evening, this one was small, with only about a thousand attending nightly. The main reason for such a small turnout was that India had just held an election, and the people were absorbed in politics. On March 22, after the Congress party had been defeated in the House of Parliament, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had resigned. Within a day or two, a new prime minister would be selected from the Janata party. Many Bombayites who might otherwise have attended the *pandāl* lecture were caught up in hearing the news, attending rallies, or talking about national politics and the fall of Indira Gandhi. But the small crowd that attended was very interested. Prabhupāda was not disappointed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke, and his faint voice was amplified over the sound system. "Bhavānanda Swami will recite two or three verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*," he said, "which is the theme of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The first verse begins with *taravaḥ kim na jīvanti*."

"Do the trees not live?" Bhavānanda recited loudly. "Do the bellows of the blacksmith not breathe? All around us do the beasts not eat and discharge semen?" He read Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport and then read the next verse: "Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels, and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer from evils." After Bhavānanda finished reading the long purport to that verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda began his lecture. He explained how the spirit soul changes bodies, life after life, but admitted that people are generally unaware of this simple fact. "But at least in India," he said, "this condition should now be changed." Not everyone would be able to realize this spiritual knowledge, but at least there should be an ideal institution. And that, he said, was the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, to create ideal *brāhmaṇas* who could guide and instruct the rest of the society.

"Not from so-called politicians," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "This is Indian civilization. Formerly even Lord Rāmacandra, who was the king—He is God Himself—still He used to consult the learned *brāhmaṇas*, sages, and saintly persons for governmental duties. The divisions of society must be there. There are so many things to be done in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Don't take that it is simply chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa chanting is the prime factor, because if you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā mantra*, then gradually everything will be clear in your mind."

Prabhupāda told how he had overcome opposition in America and how

the people there were taking Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously. When he stated his plan for a combination of American money and Indian culture, the people applauded. "The real thing is knowledge," Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded. "So don't keep this knowledge locked up in your books, but spread it. My only request is that the leaders of India should now come forward and join this movement and take this advantage of doing good to the whole world. Thank you very much." The audience's applause swelled into a sustained ovation.

Prabhupāda's voice had been weak, his body almost motionless, but he had projected a power that had overcome those bodily limitations. His presence was, in fact, more commanding than ever. His energy was obviously the pure energy of the soul, transcendental to the bodily condition. Girirājs Swami called for questions, inviting people to come up and speak into a microphone in front of the stage.

Woman: "Isn't spiritual life very taxing?"

Prabhupāda: "Do you think that you are not being taxed? Why should you not be taxed for the proper gain? You are being taxed for so many nonsense things. Why not be taxed for the proper thing? That is intelligence."

As Prabhupāda answered the questions, he became more and more forceful, although he remained very still, not even moving his hand. His answers were not as lengthy as usual—he seemed to be saving his energy—but he delivered each answer with intense emphasis and conviction.

A well-dressed, middle-aged Indian man stepped forward and asked, "Swamiji, what is the importance of health in life, and how do you advise people to maintain health? And how does it connect to your mission?"

Prabhupāda: "What is health? First of all you have to understand that however healthy you may be, you must die. So what problem will you have solved? *Janma mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*, Kṛṣṇa says. It is not my manufacturing. Although you may try to remain very healthy, nature's law is that you must die. How can you help yourself? After all, you have to meet death. So long as you have got this material body, there is no question of health. You must suffer. You may be a very great scientist, but nature's law must act. *Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni*. Foolish persons bewildered by false egotism think, 'I am improving my health, I am improving this...' He is improving nothing. He's completely under the clutches of material nature. He can't act anything independently. That is the law of nature."

Another man asked if Prabhupāda could solve political problems “with this religious basis.”

“Yes,” Prabhupāda replied. “All problems will be solved when we become Kṛṣṇa conscious.”

“What is the simple solution to understand the soul?” another man asked. “I would like to understand the soul.”

“This is very simple,” Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “but you are educated so foolishly that you cannot understand.” Śrīla Prabhupāda explained briefly that the body is made of material elements but that there is a superior element. “Anyone can understand,” he said. “Everything is explained in the *Bhagovod-gītā*. But people are not serious to understand.”

The morning after the first *pañḍal* lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda sat with Kartikeya Mahadevia, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, and Bhavānanda Goswami. Ever since Prabhupāda's extreme weakness of health had occurred in Māyāpur, he would often sit for hours alone and silent. When he spoke, his voice was often hoarse or faint, but otherwise his conversation was as it had always been: completely Kṛṣṇa conscious.

In fact, Śrīla Prabhupāda was becoming increasingly strong in his uncompromising criticism of all *mādhya*s who do not accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He was condemning materialistic civilization, calling it a dog civilization or an anthill civilization. A dog runs on four legs, and a human being runs on four wheels; but if he doesn't know the meaning of life, then he is no better than the dog. Both humans and ants build tall edifices, but if a man doesn't know of the soul and of Kṛṣṇa, then despite his proud skyscrapers, his civilization is no more than a glorified anthill.

“If more visitors come,” Prabhupāda said, “I shall describe all this anthill civilization. Health—nonsense. What health? He'll be kicked out immediately.” Śrīla Prabhupāda was referring to the man's question from the *pañḍal*. “Who is healthy if he is going to die?” Prabhupāda asked.

“‘I am so healthy that I am going to die tomorrow.’ This is their health.”

“Almost every one of those questions,” said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, “was about the body.”

Prabhupāda: “Kṛṣṇa says, *na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*. That is healthy. When you do not die although the body is destroyed, that is healthy life. What is this healthy life? The body is finished—and everything. Actually,

everything is not finished, but people are kept in that ignorance. They think the body is finished and then everything is finished, but that is not the fact. Kṛṣṇa very clearly said, *nā jāyate mriyate vā kadacin*.* If you do not question, then how is it possible? But that is the most important question."

Prabhupāda mentioned that despite the United Nations World Health Organization, still everyone was going to die. "Where is health?" he asked. "Such foolish things are going on all over the world. So organize. Introduce reality to them and spread it, slow but sure."

"So we shouldn't be impatient and compromise," said Tamālā Kṛṣṇa Goswami, "just to be popular."

"There's no question of becoming impatient," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "You have got a diamond. If there is no buyer of the diamond, that does not mean you have to throw it away. You must know that 'Here is a diamond. If I want it, I must pay the proper price.' That I want to establish. Why India's culture should be lost in this way? I am not a cheap patriot. I want to give Indian culture to the whole world. I am not going to cheat people, taking *Bhagavad-gītā* and speaking all nonsense. I want to present *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. That is my mission. Why should I cheat you?"

"We will try to follow your message properly," said Mr. Mahadevia.

"Why should India's big culture be lost for the matter of these rascal leaders?" said Prabhupāda. "They should be stopped. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is all-inclusive. Just like the economic question: *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*. Kṛṣṇa says grow food. It is practical. But when I was traveling, I saw millions of clerks coming to get education. And who is growing the food? Then these clerks have to be provided in these pigeonholes and depend on ration. Is that civilization? Throngs of people are coming. They are coming like ants. And when you go to the village, it is all vacant. No one is interested to produce food. Everyone is interested to live in the city in these pigeonholes and go to the cinema, the brothel, go to the club, learn how to drink, how to become 'gentlemen.' Is that civilization? The human aim of life is lost. You do not know why you are going to the office, why you are eating. They are keeping humanity in an animal mentality, a doggish mentality. University education is a doggish mentality. The dog wags his tail as soon as you give him some food."

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Mahadevia. "For application for a job, there are five jobs, and five dozen people apply."

* The soul never takes birth and never dies. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.20)

"Is that education?" said Prabhupāda. "Better not to be educated. Those who are not educated, they can purchase five rupees' worth of potatoes and sit down anywhere. After spending so much money, living at the cost of fathers and mothers, they have no job and no food. Then they plan some political party—Naxalite or this or that party—and join a political movement and help Indira Gandhi. You are paid to make propaganda."

"But all that has vanished now," said Mr. Mahadevia. "That plan has failed completely." Like many other Indians, Mr. Mahadevia was hopeful that with a new election, conditions would be improving.

"No," said Prabhupāda, "another one will come. This unemployment is there. When I was a child, we were purchasing mustard oil for three annas, and now it is selling for thirteen rupees per kilo. Will a change of government bring this thirteen rupees to three annas? Then what is the benefit? Stool is stool, whether you take it from the top side or the bottom side."

A few devotees entered the room and sat, while Prabhupāda encouraged them all in preaching. He said that people could not get relief through government but through Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa and His devotees were for everyone, not for a particular nation or person.

"The people are in darkness," said Prabhupāda. "And the politicians are keeping them like dogs, hogs, and camels, taking a vote from them and becoming a leader. Nobody protested last night, however, that I called all men dogs, hogs, and camels. No one came forward and said, 'You are using very strong words.' Because it is all a fact."

"They especially liked your idea," said Hṛdayānanda Goswami, "of American money and Indian culture. They applauded for that."

"Yes, that is my mission," said Prabhupāda. "I am doing that. I am bringing money from America. Nobody is paying me. It is not a joke. Ten lakhs of rupees. Who else brings?"

"Even big export companies don't bring so much," said Gopāla Kṛṣṇa.

"And they will be glad," said Prabhupāda. "They have got money, and they are getting culture. I am trying for united nations. That is the real attempt, not this United Nations, all rogues and thieves and cheaters, barking dogs. I am trying for real United Nations. Let us cooperate together."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples rallied to hear him speak like this, and they resolved to somehow counteract the forces of ignorance through Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He said they should proceed slowly but surely, just as he had done. He had begun humbly, "loitering" on the streets of New York,

and before that he had been living alone in the Rādhā Dāmodara temple. But now there was the Bombay temple, a palace that would be crowded with thousands of guests to see the Deity and attend cultural programs

"Do it enthusiastically," said Śrīla Prabhupāda "You are all young men"

"Our enthusiasm is coming from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa

"I am old man," said Prabhupāda faintly But the devotees didn't accept that, Śrīla Prabhupāda was *nata-yaunatana*, spiritually ever fresh

Each night Śrīla Prabhupāda had a different devotee read a verse and purport Leading disciples like Hṛdayānanda Goswamī and Gīrīrāja would lecture, and Prabhupāda would speak afterward He continued stressing India's real message to the world and the misfortune that occurs when people, especially the Indians, neglect it Based on his bold statements, some devotees had made a big sign and posted it outside the *pañḍal* "The Modern Civilization Is A Failure. The Only Solution Is Kṛṣṇa Consciousness"

In his evening lectures Śrīla Prabhupāda advised his hearers against identifying with any political party One day someone is a prime minister, he said, and the next day that person is finished Although Prabhupāda had begun his lecture series by apologizing to the audience, saying he could not speak much because of his poor health, each night he very strongly argued that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only solution And during the question and answer period that followed his lecture, he was often explosive.

"When chanting" a man asked through the microphone at the front of the stage, "you chant the name of Rāma as well as Kṛṣṇa But I do not see any photograph of Rāma here. What is the reason?"

"You do not see, but can you hear?" Prabhupāda asked

"I do not see!" the man insisted

Śrīla Prabhupāda exploded, "But you do not hear!" And he went on to explain that hearing is the best way of understanding that which you cannot see

Another man asked how a religious-minded person could move in the material world Prabhupāda replied, "Therefore you have to understand your spiritual identification But because you are fools and rascals you

are thinking, 'I am this body' " He said that to realize this knowledge one must be trained by a spiritual master

Śrīla Prabhupada was aware that most of the questioners had no serious intentions of following him, so sometimes he reprimanded them, like an older brother, for their foolishness. Even their asking philosophical questions with no intention of following was itself foolishness. But Śrīla Prabhupada continued to offer the diamond of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, even when the inquirer didn't possess the purchase price of sincerity. He offered it nonetheless, and at great expense to his own physical condition.

When a man rhetorically asked Prabhupada to kindly enlighten him about the soul, Śrīla Prabhupada replied, "That is already explained, that you are a soul within the body." Śrīla Prabhupada elaborated on how the senses are superior to dull matter, the mind is higher than the senses, intelligence is higher than the mind, and the soul is highest of all. "So it requires study," he said. "It requires education. The education is there, the books are there, the teachers are there. Unfortunately, you are not interested to take this spiritual education. You are now interested in technology—how to hammer. That's all."

Each evening a prominent guest would appear at the *poṇḍol* and introduce the program. One night, after J. M. Gandhi, a justice of the high court of Bombay, spoke, Bhavānanda Goswami read aloud the first two verses, along with Śrīla Prabhupada's commentary, from the teachings of Lord Rābhadeva in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad Bhagavatam*. Śrīla Prabhupada spoke briefly and agreed to take questions.

"If God is everywhere," a man asked, "why His presence is not felt by everybody?"

"Everybody is not intelligent," said Śrīla Prabhupada. "Mostly they are rascals. *Monuṣyāṇaṁ sohaśreṣu*. This is the statement by God that, 'Out of millions of persons, one tries to become perfect. And out of many millions of perfect persons, one can understand God.' So God understanding is not so easy. But if we want to understand, God will help us. That is the point."

The next man said he had several questions. "My first question is, I don't think God is opposed to sex. Seriously, I have heard many a lecture, and it is always stressed as if the God is opposed to sex. But I don't think that's so."

"God is never opposed to sex," replied Śrīla Prabhupada. "Who said? God said, *dharmaṭīruddho kāmo* 'smi. 'Sex which is not against the regulative principles of religious life, that I am.' God never says, 'Stop

sex? Otherwise, why is there *grhastha āśrama*? *Āśrama* means that there is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But make it *āśrama*, and follow the rules and regulations of *āśrama*. Then it is all right. Otherwise, you are bound up by the laws of nature."

The same man then referred to Prabhupāda's purport which Bhavānanda Goswami had read, in which Prabhupāda had criticized the life of the hoglike man who lives only for sense gratification. "One of your principal statements," the man said, "was that a man goes on the motor tram, stands there for two hours, reaches his place of business and works there from nine o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the evening, returns back, has his food and sex and all that. I found many people who have worked very hard, raised children very nicely, have sex, but lead a good life. I don't think there is anything wrong with that."

"Yes, if there is no wrong," said Prabhupāda, "it is all right. But this sort of life is not very palatable."

The man continued, "Because I find even the dog—"

Śrīla Prabhupāda interrupted, but his reply was soft and humble. "If you like that life, if you feel it is good, then that is up to you. But I don't think this is a very nice way of life, to work so hard simply for bread."

"No," the man said, "I agree there."

Śrīla Prabhupāda then raised his voice more strongly. "Then agreed, agreed. Then why disagree? That's all right, no more." The man had more questions, but Tamāla Kṛṣṇa called on someone else.

"Would you agree that God is just a concept? If you do not, please give a logical reason for that."

Prabhupāda: "Why shall I agree that God is only a concept?"

"Because I want it logically."

"You do not know logic. You have to learn logic."

"But I still would like you to explain it logically."

"Yes, but you have to learn how to know it. There is master. Just like you cannot prove logically that without father, there is a child." Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that everything we see is growing out of the earth, and the earth is described in the *Vedas* as the mother. But there cannot be a child without a father; where there is mother and child, there must be father. God, therefore, is the father of everything.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples were urging him not to exert himself, so when Svarūpa Dāmodara arrived, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked him to give

the evening lecture. Prabhupāda was very impressed with Svarūpa Dāmodara's scientific presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One of the devotees remarked that Svarūpa Dāmodara's talk seemed too technical for the audience, but another devotee replied that even if no one else had appreciated the speech, Śrīla Prabhupāda had, and so it was a success. Following Svarūpa Dāmodara's lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke for about five minutes and left, without taking any questions.

The following night Prabhupada did not speak at all, but he sat on stage while two of India's leading cardiologists, Dr Kesharrao Datey and Dr Sharma, spoke. Śrīla Prabhupāda had been garlanded by Dr Datey, and he sat patiently and silently on the *vyasasana*, satisfied that prominent Bombayites were honoring the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Dr Datey spoke about heart disease and said it could be eliminated by controlling anxiety. He then praised Śrīla Prabhupāda and his movement. After the doctors' brief talks, Svarūpa Dāmodara gave another scientific lecture and showed slides. Śrīla Prabhupāda later told Svarūpa Dāmodara and others, "This scientific program is giving me extra strength to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

"It seems like you are giving more stress to science in recent years than previously," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami.

"That is required for convincing the modernized man," said Prabhupāda. "Perhaps I am the first man who protested against these unauthorized scientists."

"Oh, yes," said Svarūpa Dāmodara. "Everybody is afraid of them except Śrīla Prabhupāda. Frankly speaking, I never knew that the problem was this serious before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda. I never thought about this."

"Therefore I took it so seriously," said Prabhupāda. "Every morning walk I would look for you and ask, 'Where is the scientist?' I thought, 'Here I have got an opportunity to impress a scientist, and that will fructify.' That was my aim. Therefore I was bothering you in so many ways."

"It is your incredible mercy, Prabhupāda," said Svarūpa Dāmodara.

"Because I cannot use the technical words," Prabhupāda said, "and he can do that. So I wanted that he should be trained up."

Girirāja arranged that one of the newly elected Janata party members of Parliament come and see Śrīla Prabhupāda. The gentleman, Mr Ratan Singh Rajda, was eager to meet the leader of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. So while Mr Rajda had been attending a political rally at Sivaji Park,

Girirāja had come to arrange the meeting.

"When I went there," Girirāja told Prabhupāda later, "he asked me to sit with them on a dias. So I did. But was that wrong?"

"Why not?" said Prabhupāda. "He is honoring you."

Girirāja said that Mr. Rajda had asked to be the first speaker at the rally, so that he could be free to come and meet with Śrīla Prabhupāda before leaving the next day for a meeting with the central government in Delhi. Girirāja explained that Mr. Rajda was a member of Parliament from Bombay South, which was the most prestigious district, and that he had formerly helped ISKCON in their case against the attempted demolition of the temple.

Mr. Rajda entered the room and made a respectful gesture of obeisance to Śrīla Prabhupāda. He said he had met Śrīla Prabhupāda once, but since then he had been in jail for nineteen months. Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed surprised. "Jail?" he asked.

Mr. Rajda explained that he had been jailed during Indira Gandhi's political emergency. More than 150,000 "patriotic people" had been imprisoned, he said, including J. K. Prakash and the present prime minister, Morarji Desai.

"When Girirāja told me that you were here," said Mr. Rajda, "I told him definitely I would like to ask for *darśana*."

"This attempt at material adjustment..." Prabhupāda began, speaking slowly. "Just like we felt a little danger under the regime of Indira Gandhi. Now we have another feeling. This is material adjustment. Material adjustment may be temporarily beneficial, but that is not permanently beneficial."

Mr. Rajda replied, "Unless there is *adhyātmika* adjustment, there cannot be lasting benefit." Mr. Rajda was obviously acquainted with the Sanskrit Vedic knowledge, and he was also aware of the value of going to see a saintly person.

Prabhupāda persisted, however, in making the point that people do not really understand spiritual life. He described that the material body is made of different elements, and yet the living being is different than these elements. "Unless we understand this fact," he said, "which is very nicely explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, this material adjustment will never make us happy."

Mr. Rajda followed Prabhupāda's point but asserted that a great change had taken place since the elections. "The basic difference," he said, "is that formerly there was no moral code observed by the rulers." He was entirely agreeable—or wanted to be—with Śrīla Prabhupāda, yet they were

speaking on different levels. Both asserted that spirituality was needed in government, but Mr. Rajda's political conclusion was that such spiritual reform was now present in his political party.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, continued to speak of people who talk of God yet don't even know the identity of the soul. He didn't specify whether this criticism applied to the former or to the present political party, although his remarks seemed to include both. Whoever was not in transcendental knowledge, whoever tried to work in the material field without knowing the difference between spirit and matter, would come to the same inglorious end.

"No," said Mr. Rajda, "the last rulers, most of them were Communists. They said religion is opium. They didn't believe in religion at all."

"Therefore," Prabhupāda said, "they say something, we say something, he says something, you manufacture something. But nobody knows what is reality. That is the difficulty. Unless you know the reality, to suggest and say, 'I suggest it,' does not mean that it is a solution. This is going on all over the world. *Na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*.* The external features, these material features—they are concerned with that. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence. But they do not know that beyond this, there is another element. Unless you come to that knowledge, there is no question of welfare activities. That knowledge is available in India."

Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted Mr. Rajda's visit as sincere and serious, and so he wanted to convince him to fully accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness if he was really serious about introducing principles of *dharma* and morality into government. Real *dharma* had to start with an acceptance of self-realization as the all-important goal of life. It could not succeed just by rubber-stamping the government as religious.

"Now we have got good government," Śrīla Prabhupāda conceded. "Very nice. Now you should take advantage of the privileges which are there in India. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is there. If you take directions from *Bhagavad-gītā*, then the whole human society will be benefited. That you do not know. That is the defect. Even big, big leaders, they profess to be students of *Bhagavad-gītā*, but they do not know anything, although it is clearly stated. Who is the leader in India who does not know *Bhagavad-gītā*? Everyone knows. Even Morarji Desai, when he was to be arrested by the leaders of government, he said, 'Wait, let me finish my reading of *Bhagavad-gītā*.' Is it not?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Rajda.

* People do not know that their highest self-interest is Viṣṇu. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 7.5.31)

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Let me finish my *Bhagavad-gītā*, then you can harass me."

Mr. Rajda added that Mr. Desai was also studying the *Bhagavad-gītā* very minutely while he was in jail.

"But now," said Prabhupāda, "he says that 'Janata is my God.' Did he not say this recently?" Mr. Rajda admitted that Morarji Desai had stated that, but that he had later clarified it.

"It is the government's responsibility to make people God conscious," Śrīla Prabhupāda argued. "It is a very simple thing. God personally is explaining how to become God conscious. It is a very simple thing: *mān-manā bhava mad-bhaktah*.* Even a child can do it, so why not leaders? Then their example should be followed. Why don't they do this, this God consciousness? Do it seriously. Then everything will be all right. They are defying the existence of God and reading *Bhagavad-gītā*. This is their position."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained to Mr. Rajda how he had been propagating the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement virtually alone. For years he had worked in the West, and now he was bringing his movement to India. "Cooperate with us," he said. "You are so kind; you have come to see me. You have got desire. So let us take it seriously."

Mr. Rajda seemed very moved, and replied, "Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Correct." "It is serious," said Prabhupāda, "but nobody has taken it seriously. *Bhagavad-gītā* is popular book. Everyone takes the *Bhagavad-gītā* and says, 'I am a student of *Bhagavad-gītā*.' But if the leaders of a society really set the example, others will follow."

"That's correct," said Mr. Rajda. "A serious effort should be made. Only lip service will not help. That is correct." Mr. Rajda reminded Prabhupāda how he had supported the Juhu temple at the time of the attempted demolition.

"So you have given a great service," said Prabhupāda. "Now it is not only not demolished, but it is standing there."

"It is standing," affirmed Mr. Rajda, "and a very nice temple."

Mr. Rajda mentioned the possibility of a meeting between Śrīla Prabhupāda and Morarji Desai. He said it could be arranged if it was convenient for Prabhupāda.

"My life is dedicated for this purpose," said Prabhupāda. "It is convenient for me at any time. I am not keeping good health at the moment,

* Always think of Kṛṣṇa and become His devotee. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.34)

yet still I have come. I am just trying, even up to the last moment of my life. If I can deliver some good to these people—that is my determination. What is this life? Life will end today or tomorrow or day after. But if you live just to the point, that is the idea. Otherwise, trees are also living—thousands of years. What is the benefit?"

Mr. Rajda confirmed that the meeting could definitely be arranged. He would see the prime minister and fix up a time.

"So," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "there's some Kṛṣṇa's purpose that you were elected."

"It is through His blessings," said Mr. Rajda.

"Take advantage of His blessings," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Do some service."

On the last scheduled evening of the *poṇḍāl*, the chief minister of Maharashtra gave the introductory speech. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, did not attend. When the devotees asked to extend the *poṇḍāl* another week, Prabhupāda agreed, but said he would move to his now-ready quarters at Hare Krishna Land.

Before leaving, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke with Mr. and Mrs. Mahadevia. Prabhupāda had one of the devotees purchase a nice *sārī*, and he presented it to Mrs. Mahadevia. "I stayed with you, and this is just my remembrance of thanks, so don't refuse." He gave a tape recorder to Mr. Mahadevia, a *sārī* to the Mahadevias' daughter Priti, and money to their servants. Mrs. Mahadevia was very pleased but she protested, saying it was a traditional duty and a pleasure for them to receive Prabhupāda in their home. Previously Śrīla Prabhupāda had been playing the tape recorder in Mr. Mahadevia's presence, and Mr. Mahadevia had admired the sound reproduction. Now, when Śrīla Prabhupāda gave him the tape recorder, he protested. "No, Prabhupāda, I was not telling you that you should give me that tape recorder. I was just telling you that it's a good piece."

"No, no," Prabhupāda insisted, "this is for you. You must keep it."

As Śrīla Prabhupāda entered his beautiful quarters at Hare Krishna Land, he remarked that no one could outdo Surabhi Swami. "I think I haven't such a place to live anywhere in the world," he said. "Los Angeles and New York are big, big cities, and London, Paris—but nobody can present such luxurious royal palace."

Seeing how the one large room was arranged to facilitate his different activities, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "This is like my room at the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple. In one corner I am writing, in another corner I am sitting, in another corner I am taking *prasādam*." The comparison was odd, since the Rādhā-Dāmodara place was a tiny cell, yet Śrīla Prabhupāda saw them as related: the beginning in Vṛndāvana and the apex in Bombay. In either place, he was the same person, humbly taking a little *prasādam*, writing his books, and ambitiously planning for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda discussed with several of his disciples and Dr. Sharma about his daily routine in Bombay. He said he would come down for *darśana* of the Deity and would lecture once a week on Sunday. On special occasions he would see a visitor in his quarters, but rarely. "Generally," he said, "people come to visit and say, 'How are you? How are you feeling?' And he takes a half hour even. So what is the use of wasting time like that, 'How are you?' Everyone knows that I am not feeling well." "So they can come to the temple room in the morning," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "If they actually want to see me, I am going there. They can see me for a half hour. And for talking, there is no need of talking, 'How are you? How are you feeling?' This is not talking."

"Instead," said Gargamuni Swami, "they can buy some of your books downstairs."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, nodding approvingly. "This is a waste of time. I want to stop this, to answer all these things, 'How are you?' " By saving his time and energy, he said, he could work on his book writing. Devotees assured him that everyone would appreciate this schedule and would be happy that he was working on the Tenth Canto.

"I think I shall be able to work from today," Prabhupāda declared. "Now I have got very nice place, full freedom. So there will be no difficulty."

That Prabhupāda would not take any morning walks went without saying. Everyone closely involved with Śrīla Prabhupāda had come to accept a new way of living, with no morning walks and very few classes. Someone suggested that Prabhupāda might like to walk on the roof, but even that seemed to be too difficult.

"No, one story I can go," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Not now, but I can go. So you are trying so much for my comfort, I do not know whether I shall be able to repay you. But I shall try my best. It is not possible to repay your debt, you are so kind. So I can simply pray to Kṛṣṇa to

give His blessings to you, so that you may remain very steady in devotional service and preach His message all over the world. Otherwise, I have no other means. Without your help, I could not do anything. So you are very kind. Kindly continue your cooperation. This is the movement for *para-upakāra* [doing good for others]. I have got report from our other temples all over the world—they are doing very nice. Is it not? Other temples outside India, they are doing very nice." Svarūpa Dāmodara, who had recently come from the West, told about the successful standard of devotional service in the temples there.

Prabhupāda said he wanted silence so he could do his work, and he told a little story about a woman whose tinkling bracelets disturbed her husband. The husband took one bangle away, but still he was disturbed by the "tink-tink-tink." He took away another bangle and another, until there was only one left. Then there was no more "tink-tink-tink." Prabhupāda specifically asked his secretaries not to gather and talk in the outer room. "Remain always one," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "and read books. Then there will be no noise. And as soon as you become two—'tink-tink-tink.' That I don't want."

"It won't happen," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "If anyone comes to see me, I will go out of the apartment."

"Yes," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "in this way arrange. It should remain always quiet and serene."

"These are *your* quarters," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "No one else should come."

"And we shall arrange for seeing our own men at a time," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "But the principle should be silence. That will be all right. I will be free to work."

Prabhupāda continued to appreciate his new situation. The rooms were well ventilated, with plenty of sunlight. Other ISKCON buildings, like the Bhaktivedanta Manor in London, were very good, he said, but in most seasons he couldn't open the doors or windows, because of the cold. "You have to remain packed up," he said. "In Detroit and London, you cannot open a window." But here in Bombay the temperature was ideal, and the area outside Prabhupāda's window was verdant.

Days went by, and most devotees in Bombay never got to see Prabhupāda. They were all used to having him come down in the morning and walking with them for an hour on Juhu Beach. And they were used to having him come to greet the Deities, give classes, and give *darśana* in the afternoon. He had always been open, especially in India, allowing

anyone to see him at almost any time. He had always received them warmly and listened to their problems or questions with great sympathy. So for them not to be able to see him, even while he was living in their midst, was traumatic. Only two or three secretaries stayed with him, and whenever other devotees came into his rooms to see him, they would feel that they were taxing him and would leave at the first opportunity.

Unexpectedly one morning Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared in the temple room, and the few devotees removed Prabhupāda's picture from the *vyāsāsana* so he could sit down. He hadn't given any warning that he was coming, and many of the devotees were absent. But the word spread that Prabhupāda was there, and the devotees came running.

After the *guru-pūjā arati*, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke to the assembly of devotees. He said he was sorry that he couldn't come down more often and that he wanted to cook for all the devotees and serve them. On Sunday, he said, he would cook a feast and invite all the devotees up to his quarters. "I shall come daily to the temple," he said, "and I shall remain up to eight for our *darśana* and talks, if there is any comment. Generally every day it will be done. And on Sunday you can fix up some time. I will speak in the evening. And then Kṛṣṇa's desire, as He likes. But for the time being, this arrangement."

Prabhupāda's humility and his exactly reading the minds of the devotees made them feel ecstatic love for him. Some of them had even been thinking that Prabhupāda had forgotten them and that other things had become more important for him. But now he was reassuring them. Although he appeared to be incapacitated, he was fully reciprocating with his disciples. He was telling them that as they were controlled by him, so he was also controlled by their loving service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda then explained the significance of *guru-pūjā*, analyzing some of the words in the song the devotees sang each morning during the ceremony. "So the necessity is *prema-bhakti*," he said. "*Prema bhakti jāha hoite avidyā vināśa jāte, divya-jñāna*. So what is that *divya-jñāna*?" Prabhupāda explained that it was the duty of the *guru* to awaken *divya-jñāna*, or superior knowledge of the self. Because the *guru* reveals *divya-jñāna*, he is worshiped. For the nondevotee, *divya-jñāna* is never manifest, and one thinks of himself in terms of his body—as American, Hindu, or Muslim.

"So we worship the *guru*," said Prabhupāda, "because he gives us superior knowledge. Not this knowledge of how to eat, how to sleep, how to have sex life and defend. Generally, the political leaders, the social leaders, they give this knowledge: how to eat, how to sleep, how to have

sex, how to defend. The *guru* has no business with these things. He has *divya-jñāna*, superior knowledge. That is required. This human form of life is an opportunity to awaken that: *divya-jñāna hr̥de prakāśita*. And if he is kept in darkness about that *divya-jñāna*, then life will be lost. Remember this. It is a very risky life to be once again thrown into the waves of birth and death. We do not know where we will go. It is very serious. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is *divya-jñāna*. It is not ordinary knowledge.

"So you should always remember these words, *divya-jñāna hr̥de prakāśita*. And because the spiritual master enlightens with *divya-jñāna*, one feels obliged to him. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo / yasya prasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi*.* So this *guru-pūjā* is essential, just as the Deity worship is essential. It is not cheap adoration. It is the process of enlightenment, of *divya-jñāna*. Thank you very much."

Not only was Prabhupāda reminding his disciples that he hadn't forgotten them, but he was also reminding them that they should not be absent from the *guru-pūjā* and worshipful thoughts of the spiritual master, even if he was not able to personally come before them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda mostly stayed alone in his room, and during the day he would move from one desk to another, either to dictate the *Bhāgavatam*, to take *prasādam*, or to speak to guests. He was especially prolific at his writing. Rising at one or two in the morning, he would dictate ninety, a hundred, and occasionally almost two hundred digits on his dictating machine. This was more than he had done in months.

But he had little appetite. He could not eat anything heavy, and sometimes he had no appetite even for a cup of milk. Palika dāst and sometimes Kṣīracorā-gopīnātha, a Bengali devotee, were the cooks. Śrīla Prabhupāda liked Kṣīracorā-gopīnātha's *śukta*, made from *nīm* leaves, eggplant, bitter melon, potato, sweet potato, and yogurt.

One morning Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for orange juice, but there were no oranges in the kitchen. Gopīnātha ran to get them, but when he returned, Śrīla Prabhupāda was ringing his bell. Gopīnātha rushed in and told him, "I am just coming. It takes some time to make the juice." After a few minutes, when the juice did not come, Śrīla Prabhupāda began repeatedly ringing his bell. As Gopīnātha at last entered with the juice, Prabhupāda spoke out angrily, "I am sick with no appetite, and when I have a little hunger, then you take hours!" He said he didn't want the

* "By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement." (Śrī Śrī Gurr-aṣṭaka by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura)

juice, but Gopīnātha put it on the table anyway.

Śrīla Prabhupāda picked the glass up and drank. "You are serving me so nicely," he said quietly. "I am always chastising you. When one gets old, he becomes short-tempered." Gopīnātha had not felt bad about the reprimand, but on these humble words from Śrīla Prabhupāda he felt terrible. Gopīnātha became so emotional that he could hardly speak. Yet he managed, in a choked voice, to say, "Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, don't speak like that. I make mistakes, and if you don't correct them, then who will?"

There were many little personal exchanges like this between Śrīla Prabhupāda and his assistants, but sometimes he would be more silent and inward than they had ever seen him before. He would spend time chanting and reading, and only on special occasions would he see a guest.

Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed to an interview with Mr. Koshi, assistant editor for *The Current* magazine. Mr. Koshi's approach was not reverent but provocative, in search of a lively interview. Prabhupāda was interested in speaking to many people through a magazine article, but he had no interest in flattering the editor or in compromising. Especially of late, as at the Bombay *paṇḍal*, Prabhupāda was speaking in the most plain, direct words. Whoever approached him he informed about Kṛṣṇa and their illusion in not accepting Kṛṣṇa. Mr. Koshi asked Prabhupāda why he had been recognized first in countries other than India.

"Because they [Indians] are so poor that they cannot purchase diamond," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "But diamond must be there. They are so poor-hearted, their education has been so poorly given, that they cannot understand."

"Poorly given?" asked Mr. Koshi.

"Yes," replied Prabhupāda. "They are teaching, 'You are this body. Jump like cats and dogs.' That's all. What is nationalism? It is, 'You are this body. Jump like cats and dogs.' A group, as a group of crows gather together—*caw, caw, caw*. That has been taught. Make a group and crow. But you don't find this word *nationalism* in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. These are all borrowed words."

"So what is your alternative?" asked Mr. Koshi.

"We are preaching internationalism," said Prabhupāda. "Everyone welcome. Come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Here is Christian, Hindu. Here is African, Muhammadan—everything. That is real United Nations. If they were thinking that 'I am American,' then why are they after a poor Indian man? Indians are known outside India as poverty-stricken, and that's a fact. But actually we are not poverty-stricken. If we cultivate our own

standard of knowledge, *Bhagavad-gītā*, then we are the richest. We can give the whole world these gifts."

Prabhupāda said it was regrettable that scholars and politicians pretend to be students of *Bhagavad-gītā* without even knowing the difference between the body and the owner of the body. They do not even know the first lessons of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

"So what is the solution?" asked Mr. Koshi.

"Solution!" Prabhupāda shouted. "You learn it!"

"But they don't want to do it," said Mr. Koshi.

"Then they will go to hell," said Prabhupāda. "What can be done? If you want to cut your own throat, you can do it. Who can save you? But our duty is to say, 'Don't commit suicide.'"

Mr. Koshi made a case for drinking tea and coffee; he could not see how such things were sinful. Prabhupāda explained that they were intoxicants.

"But there are several million like me," said Mr. Koshi.

"Millions of zeros does not mean one," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Zero is zero. If there are seven million zeros added together, you cannot make one."

Mr. Koshi also wanted to ask why Prabhupāda paid so much attention only to Kṛṣṇa, since there were hundreds of gods in the pantheon, but Prabhupāda stopped him short.

Mr. Koshi asked about the brainwashing controversy.

"There are so many accusations," said Prabhupāda, "but now it is in the court."

"But you don't require recognition of any court, do you?" asked Mr. Koshi.

"You require," replied Prabhupāda laughing. "I don't require. You require."

"Yes, until then," said Mr. Koshi, "there is doubt."

"Because you are after the court," said Prabhupāda, "after the judges. We are not after anyone. We are after one—Kṛṣṇa. That's all. We know what our duty is."

Śrīla Prabhupāda further explained that opposition was coming in America because so many young people were taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "Young men are taking it," said Prabhupāda. "They are preaching. They have sacrificed their lives. So they are intelligent persons. They can understand that they should not die. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not an old man's recreation."

"No," said Mr. Koshi, "but you are responsible for it."

"I am not," said Prabhupāda. "Kṛṣṇa is responsible. I am just distributing. My duty is to distribute. That's all."

Mr. Koshi asked Prabhupāda if he was happy with the way his movement had spread, and Prabhupāda replied, "Why shall I not be happy? I am not manufacturing anything. That is not my business."

Jumping from one topic to another in search of readable magazine copy, Mr. Koshi asked Prabhupāda, "How is your health now?"

"Not good," Prabhupāda replied. "Health or no health, it is the outward machine. That doesn't matter. But if it is a good machine, then it helps. That's all. Otherwise, machine good or bad, it doesn't matter."

"What happens when the machine stops?"

"If your machine has stopped," Prabhupāda said, "you take another machine. That's all. Why shall I be overwhelmed, 'Oh, machine is going, machine is going'? Therefore, Kṛṣṇa says, 'You are lamenting for the machine, you nonsense. That is not the *pandita's* business.'"

Mr. Koshi: "What is your typical day like? What time do you get up, and how do you spend your day?"

"How can I say?" replied Prabhupāda. "I have got so many things."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, sensing that the interview had gone about as far as it could profitably go, spoke up. "Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said, "I want to suggest that if he has some further questions, we could try to answer them, and then if there are still unanswered ones . . ."

"No," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "he has no answer on this spiritual matter. He will ask me some political questions. We have no function in politics."

Mr. Koshi disregarded the signal from Prabhupāda's secretary and went on with his questions. "You see," he said, "when I see a group of young people like these boys here dancing in the street, it is something jarring to my eyes. What is the necessity for the chant?"

"One man's food is another man's poison," Prabhupāda replied laconically.

"No, no," said Mr. Koshi, "there must be a purpose behind it."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "that is the way to spiritual understanding in this age."

Mr. Koshi asked about illicit sex, and Prabhupāda replied that sex should be used only within marriage, for begetting children.

"Don't you think that the children should be given freedom to choose voluntarily?"

"Do you want to give freedom to your children?" asked Prabhupāda.

"I am asking you," said Mr. Koshi.

"No, no," said Prabhupāda, "what is the use of giving freedom to a child with a razor? He will cut his throat, that's all."

"But at a later age, perhaps."

"Later age, yes," said Prabhupāda. "That is enjoined. When a child is sixteen years old he can do as he likes. Not before that."

Now Mr. Koshi was ready to wrap it up. "What is your message to the world?" he asked Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda and the devotees laughed. "Again you ask me," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "After reading *Rāmāyaṇa*, you are asking me whose father is Sītā. I have explained already."

Before Mr. Koshi left the room, Prabhupāda requested, "Write nice article."

"Don't worry about that," Mr. Koshi replied. "It is my job."

Śrīla Prabhupāda made sure Mr. Koshi took *prasādam* before leaving.

Disciples continued to come to Bombay in hopes of getting direct instructions from Śrīla Prabhupāda. Much could be done through his secretary, avoiding "How are you feeling?" conversations, yet sometimes Prabhupāda did meet directly with certain disciples. He was still involved, at least through his secretary, in most of the important dealings of his movement and its leaders. By mail he heard Ātreya Ṛṣi's plans for introducing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Karachi, Pakistan, and he said the plans were intelligent. He saw and approved a new film by Yadubara. He met with Hamsadūta Swami and requested him to develop the preaching in Sri Lanka. He heartily approved Prabhaviṣṇu's going to preach in Dacca, Bangladesh. He heard of the need for strong preachers in Hyderabad, and when Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciple, Śrīdhara Swami, came to see him, he asked him to go there. He saw Lokanātha Swami and encouraged him in his program of traveling by bullock cart and preaching in the Indian villages. Lokanātha had brought Śrīla Prabhupāda a Marathi translation of *The Perfection of Yoga*, and Śrīla Prabhupāda sat for some time listening to Lokanātha Mahārāja read aloud, although Prabhupāda said he didn't know the Marathi language. When an ISKCON Bombay *pājart* wanted to know if some *śaṅkara-śilas* were bona fide, Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed to see Them, confirmed that They were genuine, and advised how They should be worshiped.

Certain managerial affairs Prabhupāda would try to avoid, although

often to no avail, such as concerning the delays in completing the construction work at Bombay. He could hear the sounds of the work, and sometimes it was noisy, but it was the slowness that perturbed him. Sometimes he would sit silently for hours and then remark to his servant or secretary that he was very upset by the construction delays. "You are sincere workers," Prabhupāda told the devotees in charge, "but no intelligence. I can see that this construction work is not going on. Am I to close my eyes? I can do that, but I am a sensible man. How can I close my eyes? They are all giving their excuses."

Śrīla Prabhupāda analyzed the different leaders and, on finding defects in each of them, concluded that they were incompetent to speed up the construction. When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested that maybe they should consult a life member who was expert in construction, Prabhupāda approved. So Mr. Mohatta, an engineer and life member, was brought to see Śrīla Prabhupāda.

At that time, the construction company was demanding that all past bills be paid before they would go on with the work. But Śrīla Prabhupāda said he wouldn't pay any more bills until the work was completed; then all bills would be paid in full. Although some of the devotees were more inclined to pay the company right away, at least partially, so that the work would go on smoothly, Mr. Mohatta at once appreciated Prabhupāda's reasoning and began dealing with the construction company on that basis. He got results, and Prabhupāda was relieved. Thus, although Prabhupāda was eager to retire fully, he did not feel he could remove himself from ISKCON management yet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had no regular doctor. From time to time a *kavirāja** might show up to give a diagnosis and some medicine. But Prabhupāda wouldn't take it very seriously. He didn't consider these *kavirājas* very qualified, and if the medicine tasted bitter or produced any bad effect, he would stop taking it. Everything was up to Kṛṣṇa, and a doctor couldn't change that. Prabhupāda mentioned the relative merits of Āyur Vedic and homeopathic medicines, but like any other mundane topic, medicine was something he showed little interest in.

He began having the newspapers read to him. Much of the news dealt

* Āyur Vedic doctor

with the downfall of the Congress party and the reform promises of the Janata party. From time to time Prabhupāda would comment, "These rascals, wherever they go, they create trouble." One time he commented, "*Mandaḥ sumanda-matayaḥ*—they have got a conception which is very, very bad. Their religious, social, and political conceptions are all condemned." Prabhupāda's conclusion: "What the fools and rascals are doing—that is the newspapers."

Prabhupāda directed Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and others to write letters and articles replying to some of the news stories. In one news editorial, the writer criticized formal education as corrupting the minds of children. "Educationists and researchers," the writer urged, "should look into the question and suggest remedies."

Said Prabhupāda: "That means the rascals do not know that godlessness and godless education will be like that. The teachers who are suggesting, they are themselves bad, and they are leading. They do not know what is the defect. You can write to them, 'You leaders, you do not know what is the cause. This is the cause—*harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā/manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*. Without God consciousness, there cannot be any education, there cannot be any good qualities. You do not know this, and you are simply crying in the wilderness. All the education and its propaganda is to make the world godless, although the most scientific knowledge of God is there in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.' Write him. Give him a slap: 'You do not know.'"

Another article, "One Hundred Million Harijans Pick a New Messiah," observed the death anniversary of Dr. Amritsar, the former champion of human rights for the untouchable caste. The writer lamented that the untouchables, termed "*harijans*" by Mahatma Gandhi, were so downtrodden and presented such a baffling problem to the leaders and people of India. Śrīla Prabhupāda asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa to write to the editor, explaining how Kṛṣṇa consciousness uplifts the most fallen. "We shall elevate them to go back to Godhead, whatever they may be," said Prabhupāda. "The defect was that Gandhi started this *harijan* movement—keeping them where they are and at the same time changing their name by rubber stamp to *harijan*. That must be failure. Just by artificially giving him money or stamping approval, it won't change anything. You have to change *him*. And they have no plan for that. We should not misuse this word *harijan*, which means the personal associate of God."

Prabhupāda said that some of the senior devotees should regularly write on topics which he would suggest. More and more they should take up

the management, write essays, and give lectures transmitting the arguments he would give them.

"Now you try to manage the whole world organization, all G.B.C. men," said Prabhupāda. "Suppose I am not there. Manage very nicely. But not independently to create havoc, but really manage. I am still present, so I will give you direction. Don't spoil it. We are in a very good, prestigious position. So much hard labor. I started with a very humble condition, and now it has come such an exalted position. You don't spoil it. That is my request. Increase. That will depend on your character, behavior, and preaching. Everyone was astonished how I started this without any help. My only asset was I was sincere. Everyone knows it. Otherwise, how is it possible?"

The days went by peacefully, with mild, pleasant breezes always passing through Śrīla Prabhupāda's room. His intelligence was ever sharp and alert, and yet his health did not improve. Bhavānanda Goswami had come from Mayāpur and had been intimately serving Śrīla Prabhupāda, but he had to return to Bengal for important preaching duties. Śrīla Prabhupāda said there was no doubt that Bhavānanda was the best at giving massage and taking personal care of his spiritual master. But the personal servant's duties were not as important as preaching.

Upendra, who had come to be Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal servant, was surprised to see how Prabhupāda's diet had changed. He could no longer cook the *kichari* which Prabhupāda had previously liked. Often Prabhupāda would not even speak when he wanted something, but would indicate an idea or a desire with a nod of the head, a glance, a flick of the finger, or a sound like "Hmm."

From his room Prabhupāda heard the routine sounds of the day: the call of the cuckoos and the crows, the hammering of the marble workers, and the more distant car engines, horns, bicycle bells. He could also hear the *pājārt*'s bell and the conchshell at each *ārati*, as well as the *kīrtanas* and *bhajan*s in the temple room.

One morning while Prabhupāda was talking to Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and Girirāja, the recording of the "Govinda" song began, signifying, as it did in all the ISKCON temples, that the Deity was now giving morning *dārśana*. "Kṛṣṇa consciousness is such a nice thing," said Prabhupāda. "Alone in this world I am struggling, and the so-called intelligent persons, they will not come. They have business. Why? If it is actually beneficial to the

human society, why I should try alone? I will go on trying as long as I live. There will be no checking. But what kind of intelligent persons there are? We shall go on playing *govindam ādi-purusam tom ohoṁ bhojōmi*. People may hear or not hear. We don't mind."

Girirāja had been temple president in Bombay during the years of struggle, and he had long looked forward to the time when Prabhupāda would be living in his majestic quarters and receiving the world leaders. Now that the gorgeous ISKCON center was becoming a reality, Girirāja couldn't stand the idea of Prabhupāda remaining in solitude. So when he had asked Prabhupāda if he could bring him important guests, Prabhupāda had agreed.

Girirāja had arranged the meeting with Mr. Rajda, and now he had another member of Parliament, Mr. Ram Jethmalani, ready to meet with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Mr. Jethmalani had many doubts, however, and he had admitted to Girirāja that he didn't know whether Kṛṣṇa really existed or was imaginary. His main interest was in improving the slums. But he was willing to see Śrīla Prabhupāda—who was, after all, the *guru* of a worldwide movement—for a customary social visit. He would see him and then go on to a "thanksgiving tour" among the members of the Bombay constituency who had voted for him in the recent elections.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire was to enlighten the political leaders according to the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā*. If that was not possible, then he wanted to elicit their help, such as in arranging special visas for foreign devotees and mediating local problems between the Bombay temple and the municipal bureaucracy.

Girirāja introduced Śrīla Prabhupāda to Mr. Jethmalani, and when Prabhupāda heard of the man's interest in improving slum conditions, he replied, "So we can uplift the position of the *harijans* very easily by this process of Caitanya Mahāprabhu." He described Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda as the originators of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. And the purpose of Their movement, he said, was to alleviate the suffering of all the sinful people by giving them the Hare Kṛṣṇa *montra*. But for such a claim, Prabhupāda said, there must be evidence. "You are a lawyer," he nodded congenially to his guest. "So you want witness and evidence."

"You don't blame me," agreed Mr. Jethmalani.

"No, it is not blaming," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "It is a fact. Without evidence, without proof, how can a law be established?" Prabhupāda cited

bis evidence in a song by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, which told of two great sinners, Jagāi and Mādhāi, who had been saved by the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. That was five hundred years ago, Prabhupāda said, but today one could see practically in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement how drunkards and illicit sex bunters had become saintly. "Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so nice," he said. "Everyone can be elevated. So what is this *harijan*? We can uplift them." Mr. Jethmalani asked why there was no emphasis in the *Bhagavad-gītā* on public and social service.

"There is no need," said Prabhupāda. "This is animal conception of life. The dogs also combine together and make a sound, *ba-ba-ba ba ba*. A human being can also do like that. But then what is the difference between animals and human beings?"

"But I don't know that animals, on the contrary, serve each other," said Mr. Jethmalani. "It is men who do."

"But what is the use of serving?" Prabhupāda asked. "What you can do? What service you have done? You cannot do anything beyond the laws of nature. Now Indira is in difficulty. What can you do? In one day, everything is finished. The law of nature is so strict. You cannot do anything. You are falsely proud that you want to help, but it is not possible. *Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni*.* You can only do this service of understanding you are not this body but you are spirit soul. Your business is this. This is *dharma*."

Mr. Jethmalani protested that nevertheless there was so much physical suffering around. Prabhupāda agreed that it was good to be sympathetic, but one had to actually do something to rectify the suffering. "So you must know first of all how suffering can be stopped," said Prabhupāda. "Then you do this, the needful. Otherwise, what is the use if you do not know the method? *Duhkhālayam aśāśvatam*.* I think you have read the *Bhagavad-gītā*?"

Mr. Jethmalani said he had. He could not understand yet exactly how the *Bhagavad-gītā* could be so practical, but he was listening respectfully to Śrīla Prabhupāda and appreciating his staunch conviction. But after a few minutes, he prepared to leave. "Anyway," he said, "I will be in touch with your Girirāja."

Prabhupāda continued preaching and simultaneously asked that *prasādam* he brought for Mr. Jethmalani.

"Sir," said Mr. Jethmalani, "I will take leave of you, and with your

* Everything is carried out by the material energy (*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.27)

blessings. I hope we shall soon be—”

“We are preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness without any sectarian motive,” said Prabhupāda. “This is unity on the spiritual platform. Try to understand.” Mr. Jethmalani said he hoped that he could be of some use to Prabhupāda’s movement.

“Yes,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda, “that is required—that you want to cooperate.”

“Whatever you order at any time,” said Mr. Jethmalani.

“So inform him,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda, “and bring *prasādam*.”

At first Mr. Jethmalani said he would prefer that the *prasādam* be brought down to his car so that he could hurry and get to the public meeting on time. But Prabhupāda insisted; that was no way to honor the Lord’s *prasādam*. “Kindly wait,” he asked. Mr. Jethmalani said he did not want to eat in Prabhupāda’s presence, but Prabhupāda insisted and explained that this was an exchange of love. Finally, when the full plates of *prasādam* were brought in, Mr. Jethmalani was very appreciative. He had been so busy that he had not eaten all day, and he found the *prasādam* very tasteful.

“This is the real human service,” said Prabhupāda, watching with pleasure as his guest began to eat, “—to give them knowledge.” Mr. Jethmalani became more relaxed and friendly, inquiring about Prabhupāda’s daily routine and about different aspects of how Westerners had taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Girirāja mentioned that earlier Mr. Jethmalani had been questioning whether Kṛṣṇa had an actual existence or whether He was imaginary.

“Why imaginary?” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “He’s in the history, *Mahābhārata*.” Prabhupāda continued to give historical evidence of Kṛṣṇa from the *śāstras*, and Mr. Jethmalani listened submissively while continuing to eat. In due course, sweets were brought.

“In Northern India,” said Prabhupāda, “first of all they give sweets. So they eat sweets to the heart’s content.”

“The best way to destroy your appetite is to eat sweets first,” said Mr. Jethmalani.

“Yes,” said Prabhupāda, and they both laughed.

“So I am very glad that you have taken the *prasādam*,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “I am pleased. Therefore, I wanted that you eat before me. It is a great pleasure.”

On the best of terms, Prabhupāda and his guest parted, with Mr. Jethmalani promising he would confer with Girirāja about any problems.

Girirāja was ecstatic. His dream of Prabhupāda at the Bombay temple, transforming lionlike politicians into gentle devotees, was being fulfilled.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would repeatedly mention that the ISKCON leaders should prepare to carry on without his direct management. One day he was recalling some of the incidents of his first year in New York City, when suddenly he began speaking of the future. "Don't spoil it," he said. "Now it is up to you, my senior men. I can part away from you. My health is not good. I am old man. It is not surprising. Now you G.B.C., young boys, you are American, expert. You have all intelligence. So you don't spoil it. Let the movement go forward more. You have a lot of nice places. Don't be anxious for . . . And even if I go, where is the harm? I have given my ideas and direction in my books. Just you have to see it. I think I have done my part. Is it not? Do you think so or not?"

"Yes, you have done everything. Still, we want the whole *Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

"That will be done," said Prabhupāda. "Even it is not full, there is no loss. You are competent. You can take charge. Now you can take charge of all the money, and let me remain free from management. My only request is, don't spoil it. I have sometimes chastised so that it may not be spoiled."

Prabhupāda said that for him to see that things were going on nicely under his ISKCON leaders would make him happy. "And I will go on writing books. That will be all right?" He said there was no need for him to eat any more. Since he was not physically active, there was no purpose in taking a lunch of *capāṭṭi* and rice.

Girirāja expressed that it was the pleasure of Prabhupāda's devotees to see him eat and relish *prasādam*. But Śrīla Prabhupāda disregarded this and said the brain could be kept active just by a little fruit or milk.

These moods—Prabhupāda speaking of retirement and fasting, even hinting of passing away—were only occasional moods. They were very real, practical, and sober, but he would soon turn to other things, promising his continual involvement with his disciples, his movement, and the world. After a brief spell of such talking, he would again be commenting fiercely on the follies of the scientists and politicians.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that if a man could not accept the simple logic that there must be God, then he was obstinate and not even sane. "But these animals," he said, "they are passing on as big scientists, philosophers,

theologians, and so on and so forth. We have to stop them. *Na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūdhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ*. This is the qualification of the person who does not accept God. He is either *duṣkṛtinaḥ*, *narādhamā*, *mūdhā*, or *māyayāpahṛta-jñāna*. *Māyayāpahṛta-jñāna* means those who are highly educated but have no knowledge. *Āsuram bhāvam āśrityāḥ* means they do not believe that God exists. So as Kṛṣṇa conscious leaders, you have to chastise these rascals."

Girirāja said, "It's actually relishable to chastise them."

"Yes," Prabhupāda laughed. "It is a pleasure sport." As they spoke, Kṣīracorā Gopinātha entered with the daily newspaper. "What is the news?" Prabhupāda asked. "What are all these rascals saying? Newspaper means all the statements of rascals."

Gopinātha read the headlines aloud: "Honest Plea to Congress Chief Minister ... Mischief Calls for Assembly Election."

"Again elections," said Prabhupāda. "As if election will change their quality. Let them remain rascals and simply by election replace one rascal with another rascal. Let them remain rascal but get votes. That is described in *Bhāgavatam*: *śvaviḍ-varāhoṣṭra kharaiḥ saṁstutaḥ*.* The population is *śvaviḍ-varāhoṣṭra*, and they are giving vote, another big *paśu* [animal]. Yes, this is democracy. The voters are *paśus*, or beasts, and they are selecting another big *paśu*. This is going on. The rascals do not know that if instead of a tiger we select a lion, then what is the difference? Simply names. The tiger was president. Now the lion is president. And both of them are animals. Where is the *man*, the human being? This is going on. And because they are *paśu*, they say, 'Oh, now there is lion. Now the tiger is driven away. Now there is lion.' This is going on. Am I right?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued his sharp, critical interest in his movement. When he received a report that devotees working with the BBT in Los Angeles were receiving salaries, he became disturbed. He enunciated his policy and asked his secretary to make it known. "Kṛṣṇa consciousness means *vairāgya-vidyā*, renunciation, and knowledge," he said. "They are taking advantage of the temple facilities for their sense gratification. Do you understand?"

Prabhupāda said that temple living was for *brahmacārtis* and *sannyāsīs*. If a *gṛhastha* was rendering essential service, the temple could provide

* Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels, and asses glorify nond devotees.

an apartment for him. "But why salary?" asked Prabhupāda. "Where is the question of salary? Where is *vairāgya*, renunciation? Salary project should be stopped. If they want salary, they can work outside. In the name of Vaiṣṇava, he is drawing salary, living comfortably, having sense enjoyment. So all you, my officers, should think it over and do the needful."

Prabhupāda told how Lord Caitanya was living in the perfect situation in family life with His wife and mother, and yet He left it all to practice *vairāgya*. And thus He was praised by Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, "You are the Supreme Person, appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, and You are teaching renunciation and devotional service."

For weeks, Girirāja and his political acquaintance, Mr. Rajda, had spokeo about arranging a meeting between Śrīla Prabhupāda and India's new prime minister, Morarji Desai. When it was brought before Śrīla Prabhupāda, the crucial question was whether Śrīla Prabhupāda would consider going to see the prime minister somewhere in the city.

"But that is not respectful," said Prabhupāda. "Then he does not know how to honor a saintly person. Useless to meet. If he has no respect for a saintly person, if he thinks he is greater than a saintly person, then the visit is useless."

"Yes, then the meeting will start on the wrong foot," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "He has to come see you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. There are so many examples in the *śāstra* of big personalities coming to see saintly persons."

"Even Caitanya Mahāprabhu *refused* to see the king of Orissa," said Prabhupāda, "what to speak of going there." Prabhupāda explained that he did not require anything from the prime minister, but for the benefit of the human society he could suggest some things to him. He said that it was a fact that sometimes, when in difficulty, a saintly person could approach a king. He gave the example of Lord Caitanya's devotee Gopinātha Paṭṭanāyaka, and how the devotees asked Lord Caitanya to intervene to save him. But Lord Caitanya showed that it was a difficult job to approach such royal persons. With these guidelines in mind, Girirāja pursued the idea of a meeting.

On the evening of May 5 at about midnight, Girirāja received a phone call from Mr. Rajda; the meeting with Morarji Desai was fixed for seven-thirty the next morning. The prime minister was only going to be in Bombay for one or two days and would be staying at his son's flat on Marine Drive. Although Girirāja knew that Prabhupāda had said he would not

go to Mr. Desai, Girirāja wanted to consult Prabhupāda to see if certain leading disciples should go. Not wanting to disturb Prabhupāda, he tiptoed into Prabhupāda's hallway and peeked into the room. Prabhupāda was awake, sitting at his translating table, working. He looked up, saw Girirāja, and motioned him to come forward.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Girirāja, "I am very sorry to disturb you at this hour, but I just received a phone call from Ratan Singh Rajda." Girirāja related that Morarji Desai was ready to meet them at his residence the next morning. Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that he wanted to see if Morarji Desai would have been willing to come and meet him at Hare Krishna Land. "It's not that I'm proud," he said, "that I can't go meet him at his place. But unless his mood is respectful, there is no use." Prabhupāda said that this was the test of whether the prime minister had a proper attitude. He agreed that Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Girirāja should go ahead and meet the prime minister.

Girirāja: This meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda was one of the most intense and unique that I ever had, although I was able to be in his presence so many times. We were alone together, at midnight. Everyone else was asleep. All the lights were out, and it was just the two of us in this big room. He was sitting behind his marble translating desk, and I was sitting on the floor at his feet.

I said, "Prabhupāda, I am sorry that I had to disturb you like this in the middle of the night." Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "That's all right. Actually, with this sickness I cannot sleep at night. Even if I want to, I cannot sleep. Due to this illness, I cannot eat also. I am such an old man. There is no question of sex life and there is no question of defense either, so I guess I am liberated."

Of course, I knew that Śrīla Prabhupāda was liberated, not because of bodily circumstances, as he was humbly saying, but because he was in transcendental consciousness. He was always up at night, translating, not because he was sick and couldn't sleep, but out of devotion to his Guru Mahārāja and to Lord Kṛṣṇa. But it was a very witty, humorous remark, and I felt very honored by the whole meeting and offered my obeisances and went back to sleep.

The next morning, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Girirāja were prepared well in advance for their meeting with the prime minister. Before leaving, they asked Prabhupāda what books they should give him. Prabhupāda replied, "*Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa book, and Teachings of Lord Caitanya."

"In Hindi?" asked Girirāja.

Prabhupāda frowned. "No, English."

The devotees went in their car to pick up Mr. Rajda at his flat; from there they would go to the apartment on Marine Drive where Prime Minister Desai was staying. After Girirāja had been ringing the front doorbell for about twenty minutes, Mr. Rajda finally appeared. He said that they had to wait just five more minutes, while he continued dressing and eating. Unfortunately, by the time they reached the apartment on Marine Drive, it was eight o'clock. They were thirty minutes late! As soon as they entered, the prime minister said, "You are very late." He was already meeting with some other people and said that he would see the devotees for a few minutes. He repeated that he had been waiting since 7:25. The devotees remained silent, not knowing what to say. They apologized and gave him Prabhupāda's books. Mr. Desai didn't say much and quickly excused himself, going back to his meeting with the others.

When the devotees returned to the temple, Prabhupāda eagerly asked what happened. He was very upset to hear that they had been late. "Very bad," he said. He remarked that Morarji Desai was known for his punctuality. They had missed a good opportunity, he said, by their misbehavior. When the devotees explained that Mr. Rajda had made them late, Prabhupāda asked for a more detailed report. The devotees said the main thing Morarji Desai wanted to know was why they were late.

"Did you tell him that Ratan Singh Rajda made you late?" asked Prabhupāda.

Girirāja and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa shook their heads. Prabhupāda became disgusted and said, "Why did you not say that he made you late? That you were on time, but he made you late? I know you are thinking that he is our friend and you didn't want to embarrass him in front of the prime minister, but now the whole thing is spoiled." Feeling very foolish and ashamed, the devotees sat silently before Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda reflected for a moment. "Anyway," he said, "these men will never change their views."

Śrīla Prabhupāda occasionally talked of traveling to a place better for his health. It was May, and Bombay was hot. Soon the monsoons would come. He had considered going to Kashmir, because the air and water were reputedly good for health; but no suitable accommodations could be found there, and the weather was too cool. Then one day he received a visit from Sriman Narayan, the former governor of Gujarat.

"You should take care of your health," said Sriman Narayan. "I hope you get better."

"Oh, this is just an old machine," Prabhupāda laughed. "The more you cure it, the more it gets worse. But my work never stops. That keeps on going. My main work is to write these books, and that is going on." Several other Indian guests were present, and they at once began recommending good places for health: Srinagar, Kashmir, Dehradun, Masouri, Simla, Hardwar.

"Yes, the water in Hardwar is good," said Sriman Narayan, "but better than that would be in Hrsikeshā, where the Ganges flows. Whatever places are on the bank of the Ganges, the water will be very good. Pure Ganges water."

Śrīla Prabhupāda took these remarks seriously and turned to his disciples. "Yes, then we can go to Hrsikeshā. This time is very good. Let us arrange for that."

From that moment, going to Hrsikeshā became a definite plan, and Prabhupāda prepared to leave Bombay within a week.

CHAPTER EIGHT

“I Have Done My Part”

The first week in Hrsikeshā was idyllic, heavenly, with perfect weather and hopes of Prabhupāda eating and recovering. But on the eighth night, a violent storm hit, and with the storm came a drastic turn in Prabhupāda's health. He said the end was near, and he asked to go immediately to Vṛndāvana, in case Kṛṣṇa wanted him to depart from the world very soon.

The devotees in Hrsikeshā had been in high spirits, and so had Śrīla Prabhupāda. While crossing the Ganges by boat, Prabhupāda had requested drinking water to be fetched from the center of the river. He had liked the lodge provided by his host, and he had even gone into the kitchen to show his disciples how to cook. Word had spread through the pilgrimage-tourist town that A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami was present, and Prabhupāda had agreed to hold a *darśana* from five to six P.M. daily. The room had always been crowded at that hour with forty to fifty people, including Western hippies and seekers as well as Indians on pilgrimage or vacation. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda's voice had been extremely faint, he had spoken with force, stressing *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is.

When an American hippie had questioned him skeptically, Prabhupāda had replied, “You cannot understand, because you are crazy.” And when a lady had put forward materialistic welfare work as the highest good, Prabhupāda had replied, “Your compassion is as valuable as blowing on a boil to heal it.”

Only a few disciples were with Prabhupāda in Hrsikeshā, and they had deemed it a wonderful treat. Not only had Prabhupāda directed the cooking, but he had told stories while cooking. He had said that only a lazy man couldn't cook, and then he told a Bengali story—the story of a lazy

man—to illustrate. There was a king who decided that all lazy men in his kingdom could come to the charity house and be fed. So many men came, all claiming, “I am a lazy man.” The king then told his minister to set fire to the charity house, and all but two men ran out of the burning building. One of the two said, “My back is becoming very hot from the fire.” And the other advised, “Just turn over to the other side.” The king then said, “These are actually lazy men. Feed them.”

But on the evening of May 15, Śrīla Prabhupāda could neither sleep nor work at his dictation. The storm, a harbinger of the monsoon season, knocked out all electric power in Hṛṣīkeṣha. Since the fans were not running and the window shutters had to be closed because of the wind, the room became very hot.

At five in the morning Śrīla Prabhupāda called for Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and said he was feeling weak. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa massaged Prabhupāda for an hour. Even at dawn the wind did not let up, and sand was blowing.

The storm and power failure continued the next night. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked Prabhupāda about the swelling in his hands and feet, and Prabhupāda replied, annoyed, “Why you are bothering? It is *my* body, and I am not disturbed.” But then he added, “From the material point of view, it is not good. Please consider how everything may be turned over to the G.B.C., so that in my absence everything will go on. You may make a will, and I will sign it.” He was talking definitely about things that before he had only alluded to.

Suddenly, at one-thirty A.M., Prabhupāda rang his bell, and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and Kṣīracorā-gopīnātha responded. From beneath his mosquito net, he said, “As I was telling you, the symptoms are not good. I want to leave immediately for Vṛndāvana.” If it was time for him to pass away, he said, then let it be in Vṛndāvana. Since he wanted to leave immediately, the devotees stayed up all night, packing and preparing to leave. Train reservations were not available, however, so they decided to go by car.

Śrīla Prabhupāda rode in the back seat of the small Ambassador, sometimes stretching out on the seat. Upendra sat at his feet on the floor, while Tamāla Kṛṣṇa sat in the front next to Dāmodara Paṇḍita, an experienced driver who drove fast but with utmost care. Often Dāmodara Paṇḍita would glance into the rearview mirror and meet Śrīla Prabhupāda's attentive gaze. At one point, when Prabhupāda saw a man selling cucumbers, he asked Dāmodara to stop the car. Cucumbers, he said, were good for quenching thirst.

After four and a half hours they reached Delhi and stopped at the ISKCON center in Lajpat Nagar. It was very hot. The devotees watered down the roof, and Śrīla Prabhupāda rested there on a cot.

By five the next morning they were ready to set out for Vṛndāvana. At the Delhi temple, the devotees had given Prabhupāda a large plate of the Deities' *prasadam*, but he had only taken a few tastes. "Eating is finished," he had said. "I prayed to Kṛṣṇa to be freed from eating and sleeping, and it is happening. I have already given up mating and defending. Now all these material activities are finished with."

As they drove out of the city and into the countryside, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa noticed that Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed more peaceful. "You look very happy to be going to Vṛndāvana," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"Yes," Prabhupāda replied, "Vṛndāvana is my home, and Bombay is my office."

As they turned off the Delhi—Agra Road, Śrīla Prabhupāda saw for the first time the stone marker, "Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg." They soon met up with Gunārṇava, who was waiting on a motorcycle and who joyfully sped ahead to tell the devotees at the Kṛṣṇa Balaram Mandir that Śrīla Prabhupāda was here. At the gate of the temple a big *kīrtana* party, including all the *gurukula* children, was gathered to greet Prabhupāda with chanting and dancing. Four devotees carried Prabhupāda on a palanquin to the temple hall, where he offered his respects to the two Lords, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. After the *śrānti* ceremony honoring Śrīla Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda spoke briefly to the assembled devotees.

"If death takes place," he said, "let it take place here." Seeing his demeanor and hearing him speak these unexpected words, some of the devotees in the room began to cry. "So," he continued, "there is nothing to be said now. Whatever I have to say, I have spoken in my books. Now, try to understand it and continue your endeavors. Whether I am present or not present, it doesn't matter. As Kṛṣṇa is living eternally, similarly, the living being also lives eternally, but *kīrtir yaśaśo jīvati*. One who has done service to the Lord lives forever. So, you have been taught to serve Kṛṣṇa. So with Kṛṣṇa, our life is eternal. The temporary disappearance of this body—it doesn't matter. The body is meant for disappearance. So live forever by serving Kṛṣṇa."

Despite the finality of these words, Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to converse in his room with a few guests who remained after most of the devotees had left. A retired family man, a Mr. Bose, was present and told Prabhupāda how he was now living alone in the Kṛṣṇa Balaram Mandir. Prabhupāda

said, "You will not be able to adjust in this way of life." But when Mr. Bose expressed his determination, Prabhupāda added, "You have a very good family, so it is hopeful."

Śrila Prabhupāda went on to recall some of his activities at Hrsikesha, and he spoke of how his movement was growing stronger around the world and how in New York the judge had made a very favorable decision.

A little later, the conversation turned to ghosts, and Prabhupāda told about the haunted house of Lokanath Mullik in Calcutta. Prabhupāda had also rented a "ghost house" in Lucknow. "I am not afraid of ghosts," he said, "I am ghostproof. In England there are also many ghosts. They are generally evil, and sometimes they even kill. They can be seen sometimes entering a latrine or sitting on a pillar. By offering *pinda* one can free his forefathers from ghostly bodies. In Māyāpur there were Muhammadan ghosts, but not any more. By just chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa ghosts are driven away."

Prabhupāda began a routine. In the morning he would ride in the car at least a short distance down Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg. Although even riding was difficult for him, the morning air would be fresh and cool compared to the heat of the day, and the road, lined with new trees and shrubs, was pleasant. Each morning he would come back and faithfully, lovingly behold Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Then he would sit or rest in his main room and later move upstairs, where a desk and a chair as well as bed were set up on the outdoor veranda of his house. Here, also, the devotees had thrown water on the floors for cooling. His main room downstairs had an air-cooler.

Śrila Prabhupāda was still prone to become involved in management, and he asked his secretary to report to him on the various ISKCON activities. "You become my eyes," he said. But to think that the Bombay project was not yet completed disturbed him very much. "I have worked so far to get done whatever is accomplished," he told Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "Now if the Deities are not properly installed in my presence, it will be a great shock." But ISKCON management was too much botheration, and Prabhupāda told Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "You must give me complete relief from management."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa mentioned that Prabhupāda would sometimes become upset if he was not informed about ISKCON management, but Prabhupāda said better not to inform him. "Now take it that I am dead," he said.

Tamala Kṛṣṇa took this remark to mean that the leaders of ISKCON should manage all problems just as if Prabhupāda were no longer present. They should relieve him so he would be free to think of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. And Prabhupāda confirmed that this was the right idea. "Give me that chance," he said.

After one day in Vṛndavana, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote,

I was staying in Hṛṣīkeśha hoping to improve my health, but instead I have become a little weaker. Now I have come back to my home, Vṛndavan. If anything should go wrong, at least I will be here in Vṛndavan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda called for Tamala Kṛṣṇa Goswamī: "There are two things," he said, "—trying to survive and to prepare for death. It is better to plan for the worse. Arrange to always have three or four men with me. Have *kīrtana* and read *Bhagavatam* all the time. Now I am trying to take little food. Parīkṣīt Mahārāja would not even take water."

Seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood, Tamala Kṛṣṇa mentioned the need for a will, and Prabhupāda agreed. A will, he said, was simple enough. Whatever he spoke, several men could sign as witnesses. He recalled how his spiritual master, just before a hernia operation, had made a very simple will on a scrap of paper. Although he never underwent that operation, years later the same will was presented in court and was accepted as evidence against the plots of some of the disciples.

"He was the original founder," said Prabhupāda, "so whatever he wills, that is accepted." When Tamala Kṛṣṇa asked why Prabhupāda's Guru Mahārāja had not undergone the operation, Prabhupāda replied, "Everyone has their sentiment. He thought that the doctor was paid to kill him."

"Yes," said Tamala Kṛṣṇa, "because sometimes people were actually paid off to kill him. Actually, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you and your Guru Mahārāja were the greatest enemies of modern civilization in this century."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained, "This is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. *Bhārata bhūmite haila*. This is India's culture. The whole world is in darkness, and they are risking their life in the transmigration of one body to another. He does not know that he is eternal and that in a few years this fragment is passing away, this life is just a passing flash. This is the Vaiṣṇava's concern. What these rascals are doing? They are jumping like

monkeys, wasting time. That is the Vaiṣṇava's compassion, *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*."

When some other devotees gathered in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa explained Prabhupāda's recent decision. "So Śrīla Prabhupāda had decided that the best medicine would be *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *kīrtana*, and no need of any doctors who have promised to help save the life. We shouldn't bring them. And no outsiders."

"No medicine for the body?" asked a devotee.

"Oh, whatever medicine I am taking," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Yogendra Ras."

"He has tried so many medicines," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa said. "Every doctor has come, and they have each given their medicine. And he has tried them. This medicine always works: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *kīrtana*."

"*Bhavaūṣadhāc chotm mano-'bhirāmāt*," quoted Śrīla Prabhupāda. (He had been quoting it again and again.) "It pleases the ear and the mind, *bhavaūṣadhāc chotra-mano-'bhirāmāt, ka uttama-śloka-guṇānuvādāt*. Make glorification of Bhagavān, and everyone will appreciate it—except the animal."

At Śrīla Prabhupāda's request, *kīrtanas* by a group of no more than four or five devotees and *Bhāgavatam* readings went on constantly, whether he was in his room, on the veranda, or on the roof. In the morning from five to ten and in the evenings from three to nine he would sit with his eyes closed, absorbed in the *kīrtana*, "the medicine for the disease of material existence, which gives pleasure to the mind and ear."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa promised to Prabhupāda he would read him no letters and bring him no visitors. Prabhupāda had long wanted this, and now it at least would come to pass.

The writing of the will would not be done with the attitude that the end had come, but in the spirit of "preparing for the worst." It also meant finishing things so they would not have to be done at the last minute. Prabhupāda was concerned that his movement continue securely, with all ISKCON properties in the possession of his disciples within the institution and all his instructions made clear for the future. These matters should be dispatched now in a will, and the G.B.C. men should gather in Vṛndāvana to make these last arrangements and to be with him. Once these things were settled, Prabhupāda would be free to continue writing his books with no worries.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa later asked Śrīla Prabhupāda whether his new decisions

indicated that he was losing his desire to fight to live. Śrīla Prabhupāda indirectly admitted it was so. "Therefore," he said, "I do not wish to leave Vṛndāvana. If, by Kṛṣṇa's desire, I survive, then we shall see later on. Otherwise..."

Even though his secretary did not read him letters or bring him news, Prabhupāda went on thinking. "What about the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple?" he asked. He had been renting his rooms there for years, and the temple proprietors had often challenged his rights. This was just another of his multifarious worries in maintaining his preaching around the world. Prabhupāda advised that his disciples always live in the Rādhā-Dāmodara rooms; that would prevent the landlord from trying to use them for something else. Even while lying quietly, resting, Prabhupāda would turn over such problems in his mind.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa wanted to double check to see that Prabhupāda actually wanted all the G.B.C. men from all over the world to come. It would be costly and demanding, so he wanted to be sure that Prabhupāda really wanted it. When Śrīla Prabhupāda assured him that he did, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, who saw his service as responding to whatever Śrīla Prabhupāda desired, also spoke in favor of the idea.

"Because they love you," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "I am sure they will all want to come and be with you."

"Your love for me," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "will be shown by how much you cooperate to keep this institution together after I am gone."

The room was fully decorated with rose and jasmine garlands. The *kīrtana* party was singing sweetly and softly. Śrīla Prabhupāda would go for hours without speaking, and when he did speak, he was usually brief. Yet he covered the same range of topics as always, and in the same pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Recalling the contractor's cheating in Bombay, he said, "It is not only a sin to cheat, but it is sinful to allow yourself to be cheated. With so much effort and difficulty, both from my part and my disciples', the money has been collected, and now it becomes spoiled. I cannot allow this."

Śrīla Prabhupāda would usually make comments such as this while lying in bed. As soon as he would speak, some of the devotees attending him would come close to catch his words, and sometimes the *kīrtana* would stop.

The parts of Prabhupāda's daily schedule that remained the same as before were his rising in the middle of the night to translate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, his morning massage and bathing, and his hearing news through his secretary. He had all but stopped his morning car ride, as well as his *darśana* of the Deities. Eating was almost nil. He asked to be moved from his bed downstairs to the one upstairs, and sometimes he would sit at his desk.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa read Prabhupāda a letter from Girirāja, more like a loving prayer than a letter. Girirāja had quoted a verse by Prahlaḍa Mahārāja from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But Your servant Narada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I leave his service?

Śrīla Prabhupāda was very affectionate toward Girirāja for his faithful, fearless service, and he listened with great appreciation, closing his eyes and drinking in every word of the prayer.

That same evening, Śrīla Prabhupāda sat up to receive a member of Parliament, Sri Sitaram Singh. Although he was appreciative that a highly placed man was visiting, he spoke on the absolute plane, exposing material illusions. Immediately, he attacked the narrow-mindedness of politicians with their party politics. He also exposed the rascaldom of politicians who claimed to support nonviolence on the basis of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. At times like this, the devotees with Śrīla Prabhupāda would almost forget that he was making preparations for the end of life. Later that night, after Mr. Singh had left, Prabhupāda said, "I can speak some more, or if Kṛṣṇa desires, then whatever I have given already, that is all."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was unlimitedly willing to speak about Kṛṣṇa and to help give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. But how much longer he would stay, how much more he would give, was up to Kṛṣṇa. With more time, he would carry on Kṛṣṇa's will in the material world. But if Kṛṣṇa's desire was that he should leave, then he would also accept that willingly. Even if he had to soon depart from this world, he could not simply shut off

his burning compassion, his preaching spirit. Most of all, he desired that what he had started—a worldwide movement to save suffering souls—should continue.

The word was sent to all GBC secretaries worldwide. Śrīla Prabhupāda might depart very soon, and he wanted them to be with him in Vṛndāvana. As soon as possible, the GBC men left their duties and came to him. The last time most of them had been with him was in February, during the annual meeting in Mayāpur. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa informed them of Śrīla Prabhupāda's recent turns—how he had been preaching in Bombay but not eating, how he had gone to Hṛṣīkeṣha and gotten worse, and how he had come to Vṛndāvana, sensing that the end was soon. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa had explained that Śrīla Prabhupāda had asked that he simply be administered the medicine of the holy name continually, that the GBC and *sannyāsīs* be gathered to chant with him, and that a will be made securing ISKCON properties and insuring the continuation of the ISKCON institution. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa also mentioned that Prabhupāda had said that their love for him would be shown by their cooperation in keeping ISKCON together after his departure.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswamī confided to his Godbrothers that his own feelings were mixed. It was a time of sorrow, and yet Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed relieved now that he had decided not to struggle to survive. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa said he couldn't but feel happy at Śrīla Prabhupāda's relief from all concerns. Bhavānanda Goswamī, one of the first GBC men to arrive, told the others how he had said to Prabhupāda that on the one hand he felt sad that Prabhupāda was departing, but also joyful that he would be able to leave this nasty material world and rejoin Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda had approved the sentiment, adding that although his Guru Mahārāja had become disgusted at the end of his life due to the misbehavior of his leading disciples, he did not feel that, rather, he liked the company of his disciples and felt they were doing their best in carrying out his order. But he also warned them not to spoil ISKCON and become another Gaudīya Math by splitting up.

The ISKCON leaders formed small groups and took turns in being with Prabhupāda and chanting and reading to him. He would often be sitting up in bed in his main room downstairs, and the high ceilinged room with its black stone floor would be very dimly lit, though decorated with flowers.

and framed pictures of ISKCON Deities. His room was comfortable, despite the oppressive heat, because of the air-cooler and overhead fans.

Sometimes Prabhupāda would clap his hands softly to the *kīrtana*, and he was always ready to hear and evaluate reports of his disciples' preaching. The main difference about Prabhupāda was his physical appearance. As one G.B.C. man put it, he looked like one of the great ascetics depicted in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, grown extremely thin like Dhruva Mahārāja or Rantideva, who performed great austerities while rapt in meditation on the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would alternately sit up in bed or lie down while hearing *kīrtana* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Now he was always surrounded by concerned disciples, and he seemed happier. Some of the devotees who had been with him in Vṛndāvana just before all the G.B.C. secretaries had arrived could see that he felt more encouraged; perhaps by the sincere prayers of all the devotees a dramatic change might come.

Bhavananda Goswami and Jayapatāka Swami brought reports from Śrīla Prabhupāda's beloved Māyāpur project. Bhavananda said the temple was filled with transcendental activity, and the *gurukula* boys would chant Hare Kṛṣṇa even while sweeping the roads. Work was just beginning on a new residence for Śrīla Prabhupāda; it would be surrounded by fountains, a terrace, and a big pond.

"It has not yet begun?" Śrīla Prabhupāda asked. Jayapatāka Swami replied that the plans had been drawn and that the architects said it would be no problem. They could build right through the rainy season.

"How long will it take?" Tamala Kṛṣṇa asked on Śrīla Prabhupāda's behalf.

"Six months."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamala Kṛṣṇa, "I think you are tied to this planet by the love of your devotees."

Śrīla Prabhupāda uttered a thoughtful "Hmmm. All right."

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda had indicated a will to live by saying, "All right," to Bhavananda he said, "There is no hope of life. Therefore I have called the G.B.C. If I can die in Vṛndāvana... Kṛṣṇa can accomplish anything, but from the physical condition there is no hope."

"But Kṛṣṇa is Paramēśvara," Bhavananda said.

Prabhupāda laughed. "That is another thing." If Kṛṣṇa liked, then he would live. But Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to understand the critical state of his health. "The brain is working," he said, "but the body is not allowing. Don't worry. Everyone will die today or tomorrow. I am also an old man. There is nothing to be regretted. It is up to Kṛṣṇa."

Dropping his reassuring stance and pleading as a helpless student, Bhavānanda asked, "What can we do, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

"You can pray to Kṛṣṇa," Prabhupāda replied "Kṛṣṇa is all powerful And one of the most important things is that when I am gone, don't spoil it Keep it, Māyapur"

Jayapatāka Swamī gave glowing accounts of his recent preaching to both Hindus and Muslims in Dacca "There have been no *sadhus* in Bangladesh for years," said Jayapataka, speaking strongly and victoriously, though sitting like a child at the foot of Śrīla Prabhupāda's bed "People are eager to hear about Kṛṣṇa consciousness Ten thousand people gathered It was the biggest function in the history of the colony, either Hindu or Muhammadan The Muhammadans are also interested They don't know anything about Lord Caitanya Many ask if we have any books on the life of Lord Caitanya They like to read"

"That book *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*," Śrīla Prabhupada interjected in a voice hoarse but full of life and interest

Jayapataka said they had prospects of getting a temple there. "Many young men are coming and asking very intelligent questions," he said "They ask questions about our Deity worship, about *guru*, about *hari nama*. Very intelligent questions There is no CIA rumor There is no type of any bad talk about us No envy at all And because they are a little oppressed, they are always being challenged about believing in Kṛṣṇa—so that is why they are eager to understand"

"What about the Muhammadans?" asked Śrīla Prabhupāda

"At one place," said Jayapatāka, "when Prabhaviṣṇu lectured in Dacca, a Muhammadan heard and came to him and said, 'What you are preaching is very applicable to the modern day In my district there is nearly a majority of Hindus, but when they have their *sadhus* come and preach there, I find it very old fashioned and very unacceptable But your preaching we find enthusing' So he arranged a program Ultimately every Muhammadan that I have met has become interested, just because it was presented in a way that was acceptable to them They say, 'You are Hindu?' We say, 'No, we are Vaiṣṇava Vaiṣṇava means we believe in only one God There is no one equal to Him So you believe in the same thing'"

"That is a fact," said Prabhupāda "*Asamordhva*. There cannot be anyone equal to God or greater than Him"

"Many young men, both Hindu and Muhammadan, will join," said Jayapatāka Swamī "I am sure. But right now we are getting the society registered and getting our place."

"You did not *ṣ* yet?" Prabhupāda asked "Get the place and

get the society registered." Prabhupāda added that Jayapatāka should do everything very seriously. "It is increasing," he added approvingly.

When Rāmeśvara Swami came into the room for his *kīrtana*, he brought Śrīla Prabhupāda the newest editions of the *Kṛṣṇa* book trilogies and reported on how the various books were selling.

"Keep your health very nice," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. "Live as many years as possible. Be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then next life you go back to home—permanent life. There is no cheating, no politics, no personal ambition to fulfill. There is not any tinge of any personal salvation. Now can anyone point out that here is personal sense gratification? Can anyone? Can you say, 'Here is my personal sense gratification'? There is no such thing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is our desire—that we live with devotees and execute the mission of our predecessors. This is our ambition. Without ambition no one can live. Our real self-interest is to execute Kṛṣṇa's desire. So do it very carefully, and if one fourth of the Americans become Vaiṣṇavas, then the whole world will change. . . ."

"In America now," Rāmeśvara said enthusiastically, "the book selling has surpassed last year. We are trying to double. We have not yet doubled, but it has gone beyond last year."

"It is going to double," said Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"By your mercy," Rāmeśvara added.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "Be doubly blessed." At these words the devotees laughed happily.

Śrīla Prabhupāda then turned to Kīrtanānanda Swami. "So New Vrindaban is developing. Be happy."

"We can't be happy if you are not there," Kīrtanānanda said.

"I am always there," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "When I see that everything is going nicely, then I am happy. Even with this body. Body is body. We'll have next body."

"Wasn't it Pūru who gave his father his youth?" asked Kīrtanānanda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda nodded. "King Yayāti traded his old age."

"And you can do that," said Kīrtanānanda.

"No, why?" said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "You are my body. Then you can do it. There is no difference. Just like I am working, so my Guru Mahārāja is there, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Physically he may not be, but in every action we do."

"In the *Bhāgavatam*," said Tamālā Kṛṣṇa, "you say that for whoever follows the guru, the guru lives with him eternally."

"So I am not going to die," said Prabhupāda. "*Kīrtir yasya sa jīti*."

One who does something substantial, he lives forever. He doesn't die. One has to accept another body according to his *karma*, but for a devotee there is no such thing. He always accepts a body for serving Kṛṣṇa, so there is no problem."

Rāmeśvara Swami informed Prabhupāda that the last volume of the Ninth Canto was at the printer, and the first volume of the Tenth Canto would follow in two weeks. Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired about whether it was more economical to print the Hindi books in India or America, and they discussed.

"Internationally all conditioned people are suffering," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "But you devotees are above all dangers. Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja knows that very well. He has no danger, sticking to that New Vrindaban program. There is always improvement. They eat first-class nutritious food. And what is that place in Pennsylvania?"

It was like old times, with Śrīla Prabhupāda hearing reports and correcting and inspiring his leaders to do more and more, assuring them that Kṛṣṇa would help them.

Rāmeśvara Swami described for Śrīla Prabhupāda's pleasure the great volume of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature being distributed. "At the end of this year," he said, "we will have sold at least sixty-five million books on Kṛṣṇa. Every year we are selling at least fifteen to twenty million books now."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "They ask, 'Why are you stressing so much on Kṛṣṇa?' But that is the only message. It will increase more. People will be inquisitive."

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to talk, but with occasional reflections on his present condition. "What is the problem?" he asked. "We are talking about Kṛṣṇa. So if all of a sudden I collapse, then what is the problem? *Kṛṣṇa tvadīya-pada-paṅkaja . . .** Ordinary dying is *kapha-vāta-pitta*, choking. But if in the *kīrtana* you die, oh, it is so successful. Not the injection and operation—that atmosphere. But in *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*. That is glorious. Not oxygen, gas, dying, and so much trouble. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa—*bas*. And let me die, Kṛṣṇa. Never be disturbed. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. For chanting you have got so much material. Now read something from this book."

* In this Sanskrit phrase Śrīla Prabhupāda is chanting part of a favorite verse of his from *Mukunda-mālā-stotra* by Mahārāja Kulasekhara. The author is praying to fix his mind on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and pass away in that condition, rather than dying when the bodily functions are disturbed and the mind may be distracted from Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda reached over and opened *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and handed it to Rāmeśvara, who began to read

One after another the GBC men arrived. Ātreya Rṣi brought pomegranates and sweet lemons from Iran, as well as good news of the ISKCON restaurant there. Śrīla Prabhupāda listened with intense interest to Ātreya Rṣi's report and then spoke for a while about the Middle East and how to best present Kṛṣṇa consciousness there. Kīrtanānanda Swamī had brought milk products from New Vrīndaban, and a *sannyasī* came from Thailand with fruits and flowers.

When Ādi keśava Swamī came in, Prabhupāda beamed. He heard with great pleasure Ādi keśava's report of the impact of the New York court decision on Indians around the world. When Svarūpa Dāmodara arrived he showed Prabhupāda the manuscripts for three pamphlets proving scientifically and mathematically that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the Absolute Truth. After each report and greeting, Śrīla Prabhupāda would ask that the *kīrtana* be continued, and he would become silent, as the devotees sang softly, hour after hour: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare! Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. A very small pair of *karatalas*, the only instrument, produced a soft, pleasant ringing. The voices of the chanters were subdued, but their minds were firmly fixed in devotion to Śrīla Prabhupāda and the holy name, concerned that Prabhupāda could hear the *maha mantra* without interruption.

The devotees who were chanting experienced their own realizations while intimately associating with Śrīla Prabhupāda in this way. They could understand this was a most important connection with Śrīla Prabhupāda, to come into his presence and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and *jaya śrī kṛṣṇa-caitanya* and read to him from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to hear the transcendental sound, yet he was simultaneously teaching his disciples. After his departure, they would retain the deep impression of the significance of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and they would go on giving the mercy to others. He was teaching them how to become pure devotees. He was sharing himself with them by having them chant very simply and read his books without speculation, so that later, when preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they would remember Śrīla Prabhupāda would always be with them as they went on chanting simply and preaching without speculation. Whether he would depart now or later, he was preparing them.

Sometimes during the chanting Śrīla Prabhupāda would communicate unspoken feelings with his disciples. He might simply glance at one of

the devotees, but that devotee would feel a surge of loving emotion and realization. Suddenly he would understand better how pure and compassionate Śrīla Prabhupāda was. And the devotee might recall how Śrīla Prabhupāda had come and saved him, bringing him to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus the G.B.C. men, while chanting and becoming purified, were rededicating themselves, hoping that Kṛṣṇa would accept them as surrendered souls. They asked that Kṛṣṇa bless them and make them fit for whatever happened.

"Do not leave me," Prabhupāda said at one point.

"Are you feeling better?" Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked.

"Yes, I am feeling a little better. Go on administering this medicine."

At Śrīla Prabhupāda's request, the devotees staying with him between 1:30 A.M. and 3:30 A.M. read to him from *Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*. He would usually be on the roof then, sitting up in bed. A few bare bulbs would light the darkness, and all would be quiet and still except for the sound of the devotee reading. After one such reading, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked Rūpānuga about the preaching in Washington, D.C. Rūpānuga replied briefly, and then he and Balavanta began talking about deprogramming. Then Rūpānuga said he had written "A Prayer to The Higher Authorities," and asked if he could read it to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

O superior Vaiṣṇavas!

O compassionate Ācāryas
of the Holy Name!

O supreme authorities,
Masters of our fate!

Have mercy upon us!

(We are not able to make any prayers,
but this is an emergency!)

Śāstra teaches that because of disciples' bad behavior, or to allow some personal service, or to exhibit ecstatic symptoms, the spiritual master may display bad health (although he so kindly says it is simply due to old age and personal neglect of his health—meaning that he has worked too hard to save us)

But we may not speculate upon the mind of the Ācāryas.

Please hear our petition! We pray for the kindness of our Grandfather, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who is by nature merciful upon his spiritual grandchildren.

We pray for the continued compassion of the Six Gosvāmīs, who are

already famous in all the three worlds for saving conditioned souls. We pray for the benediction of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the most magnanimous Supreme Personality of Godhead.

We pray to Rādhārāṇī, Queen of Vṛndāvana, protector of our neophyte *bhakti*.

And we pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, whom we cannot even approach without the guidance of our Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We, the fallen servants of His Divine Grace, beseech all of our Masters—Please give Śrīla Prabhupāda more time! Time to insure the strength of this movement. Time to finish the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And a little more time for us to spend at the lotus feet of His Divine Grace—that we may become pure devotees by his mercy.

We implore you—these ten years have passed so quickly, and we are caught far too short of perfection (You know that actually only ten milliseconds have passed in eternal time).

Therefore kindly extend his stay, lest we fall from the spiritual path.

O Vaiṣṇava saints!

O Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura,

Our eternal grandfather,

O Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana,

O Rādhārāṇī, Mother of *bhakti*,

O Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu,

the Master of all,

O Lord Kṛṣṇa, the final repose of our love,

O Vaiṣṇava *Ācāryas*—

Kindly have mercy on us:

Please don't yet take

Śrīla Prabhupāda away!

Kindly grant this emergency prayer. .

“Either way,” said Prabhupāda, “I have no objection—to stay or leave.” He said there was a Bengali saying that if a *ḍheṅki* (a wheat-threshing machine) goes to heaven, what will it do there? It will thresh wheat. Because the thresher is constituted in a particular way, it will thresh wherever it goes. Similarly, the pure devotee, whether he is in the material world or the apiritual world, will serve Kṛṣṇa. In this way Śrīla Prabhupāda was indicating that he had no personal anxiety. But he had also indicated that although everything was dependent on Kṛṣṇa, the prayers of the devotees might influence Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, humbly consider-

ing themselves neophyte devotees, took it as a sign of Prabhupāda's protective mercy that he said their prayers could keep him with them and that he, although an eternal, exalted associate of Kṛṣṇa, liked to be with his tiny disciples. "My Guru Mahārāja was disgusted," he had said, "but I like your company."

A *sonnyāśī* disciple read aloud a prayer he had written, petitioning the Supreme Lord for Prabhupāda to live for a hundred years. On hearing this, Śrīla Prabhupāda opened his eyes wide and smiled. But again he pointed out that he was not afraid of death. Wherever he was, he said, he was in *Vaikuṇṭha*. Especially being in *Vṛndāvana* and being surrounded by the *kīrtana* of his disciples was *Vaikuṇṭha*.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami told Prabhupāda that he had offered a prayer in the temple that morning while standing before Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Kṛṣṇa has done so many miracles, he said, so it would not be very amazing if He kept Prabhupāda alive. And Balarāma, who was supporting all creation, would not be weakened if He gave Śrīla Prabhupāda a little strength. "In this way," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa said, "we may all pray to Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma to save you. We are not very important, but still They may hear."

"No," Prabhupāda said. "You are all pure devotees with no other motives."

Śrīla Prabhupāda regarded the petitions of his disciples as expressions of sincere affection, not at all improper spiritually. But he pointed out that it was ultimately up to Kṛṣṇa. He had His plan. In any case, Prabhupāda said that he would be all right. He told the story of a sage who blessed different persons in different ways. The sage blessed a prince to live a long life, since after death he would be punished for his sensual life. The sage also blessed an ascetic to die at once, so as to be relieved of the suffering of his austerities and receive his pious rewards. But when asked to bless a pure devotee, the sage said that because the devotee had already obtained the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his condition would be the same, whether he lived or died.

Prabhupāda knew, even better than his disciples, that there was much he could do if he remained in the world, but he simply wanted to see what Kṛṣṇa desired. He saw strong evidence, however, that his life was about to end, at least according to the condition of his physical body, and this in itself indicated that Kṛṣṇa's desire was that he soon leave this world.

The G.B.C. men met and decided that aside from Prabhupāda's will, which would secure the ISKCON properties, and aside from making all

the bank accounts within ISKCON secure, there were also a few questions which they should put before Prabhupāda before it was too late. These questions, such as how future disciples would be initiated, would have to be answered, otherwise they would become a source of speculation and havoc after Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure.

A selected committee from the GBC came before Śrīla Prabhupāda as he sat up in bed in the main room downstairs. Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami was to be the spokesman, but he felt shy and uneasy. To come directly before Śrīla Prabhupāda and ask about what should be done after his passing away might seem impertinent.

But it was necessary. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself had requested that the GBC come to Vṛndāvana to take care of exactly this kind of business. Besides, for a disciple to feel foolish and awkward before Śrīla Prabhupāda was normal. And certainly the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples' continuing his movement was so grave that its importance transcended the awkwardness of the moment. Nevertheless, Śrīla Prabhupāda was Śrīla Prabhupāda, and even though apparently invalid, he was as awesome as ever. If he were displeased with the questions, then it would be frightening.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Satsvarūpa, "we were all asked by the rest of the GBC to come to ask some questions. These are the members of the original GBC as you first made it out. Our first question is about the GBC members. We want to know how long should they remain in office?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke slowly and deeply. "They should remain for good. Selected men are chosen so that they cannot be changed. Rather, if some competent men are found, they should be added." Śrīla Prabhupāda took the opportunity to recommend that Vāsudeva become a GBC member representing Fiji. "Add him," said Prabhupāda. "But the GBC is not to be changed."

Satsvarūpa asked what to do if a GBC member gave up his post, and Prabhupāda said that the GBC body should elect another man.

"Our next question," Satsvarūpa proceeded, "concerns initiation in the future, particularly at that time when you are no longer with us. We want to know how a first and second initiation would be conducted."

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up, I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *ācārya*."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa interjected, "Is that called *ṛtvik ācārya*?"

'Yes,' Prabhupāda said. 'ṛtvik.'

"Then what is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation?" asked Satsvarūpa.

"He is *guru*," said Prabhupāda.

"But he does it on your behalf," said Satsvarūpa.

"Yes, that is formality. Because in my presence one should not become *guru*. So on my behalf, on my order—*āmāra ajñāya guru*. He is actually *guru*, but on my order."

"So they may also be considered your disciples," said Satsvarūpa, referring to those persons initiated on Prabhupāda's behalf by the *ṛtvik ācāryas*.

"They are *their* disciples," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. Now he was speaking of initiations after his passing away. "They are the disciples of the one who is initiating. And they are my granddisciples. When I order you to become *guru*, you become regular *guru*, that's all. And they become the disciples of my disciple."

The G.B.C. members present were satisfied that Śrīla Prabhupāda's reply to the intricate inquiry was clear and conclusive. Later, he would select "some of you," and whoever he selected could become an initiating *guru*. What he had already described many times throughout his Bhaktivedānta purports was now being implemented: his disciples would become *gurus* and accept disciples of their own.

Satsvarūpa next asked about the BBT. "At present," he said, "no translated works are to be published without your seeing and approving them. So the question is, is there any system for publishing works in the future, works that you may not see?"

"That we have to examine expertly," Prabhupāda replied. He accepted the principle that future works could be translated from Sanskrit, but he cautioned, "But amongst my disciples, I don't think there are many who can translate properly."

"Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Kīrtanānanda Swami, "we think that you cannot leave us very soon."

"I don't want to," said Prabhupāda, "but I am obliged. What can I do?"

"If you don't want, then Kṛṣṇa won't want," said Kīrtanānanda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda went on to describe the special qualifications for translating Sanskrit Vaiṣṇava literature. It would take a realized soul, he said. "Otherwise, simply by imitating, A-B-C-D, it will not help. My purports are liked by people because it is presented as practical experience. It cannot be done unless one is realized."

"It is not a matter of scholarship," added Bhagavān.

"Lord Caitanya says," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "*āmāra ājñāya guru*. One who can understand the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he can become *guru*. Or one who understands his *guru's* order in *paramparā*, he can become *guru*. And therefore I shall select some of you."

By repeating himself, Prabhupāda emphasized his point—he would select who would be *guru*. And he also repeated his other point: "So there is no question of changing G.B.C. Rather, one who is competent, he can be selected to add by the vote of G.B.C."

"Of course, if someone falls away," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa proposed, "just like in the past G.B.C. men have fallen down . . ."

"They should be replaced," said Prabhupāda. "They must be all ideal *ācārya*. In the beginning we have done for working. But now we should be very cautious. Anyone who is deviating, he can be replaced."

Their few questions answered, the G.B.C. men sat silently before Śrīla Prabhupāda, awaiting any further instructions but anxious not to tire him with their presence.

"So, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "there is a chanting party ready to do some *kṛtana*. Maybe they can come in?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda had already given the outline for his will to Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami: The G.B.C. would be the ultimate governing authority in ISKCON. Three trustees would be assigned to each ISKCON property. The money in Prabhupāda's name in various banks would become ISKCON's property. A small pension would be allowed for his exwife and sons.

Even while the G.B.C. was gathered to make a thorough draft and make the will legal, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a visit that made him anxious over his ISKCON society. One of the Goswamis of a Vṛndāvana temple visited and praised Śrīla Prabhupāda. But in the course of the conversation, the man asked, "After you, who will take charge of the property?" As soon as the gentleman left, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and Bhavānanda also gathered.

"In India you can understand there is an undercurrent," said Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"Undercurrent," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa repeated.

"An undercurrent is going on," said Prabhupāda, "that after my demise it may be taken away from your hands."

"Whew! You understood that from this discussion?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"I understood it long ago," said Prabhupāda. "How are you going to guard yourselves?" Once again, it was Prabhupāda who had to make them aware of worldly wisdom.

"You ordered that we form a trust property with life-long trustees," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "Actually this property is the envy of all India. They are the best properties."

"They envy our prestige," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "our position—everything. Everywhere we are first class."

For Śrīla Prabhupāda, a will meant protection for his ISKCON. As Śrīla Prabhupāda had explained, a devotee has not a tinge of self-interest—everything is for Kṛṣṇa. But in his purity he must not be naive. ISKCON was a large, growing organization of properties and monies intended one hundred percent for use in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda called on the G.B.C. to be vigilant.

While his G.B.C. men discussed privately the details of the will, Śrīla Prabhupāda lay in bed, anxiously concerned about ISKCON's properties. He didn't attempt to eat, and Upendra had to massage his chest. Later that day, while surrounded by a sweetly chanting group of devotees, he again brought up the threat. "There is a big plot going on," he began. "They are very troublesome."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, who knew what Prabhupāda was talking about, said, "This should be done immediately—make a trust property."

"This shall be done," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Very nice." What Prabhupāda was asking was not unusual. But it had to be done soundly, expertly. And that meant Śrīla Prabhupāda would have to do it himself. He wanted no more management, but could his disciples assure him on this point of greatest anxiety, that the institution's properties and monies would be protected?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa spoke up to assure Prabhupāda of the G.B.C.'s competence to deal with this. "This shall be done for all the properties," he said, "but especially here in India."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Bhavānanda Goswami, "the trustees should be designated."

"Trustee without designation," Prabhupāda replied. "Where is trustee? I have already made one draft of trustees—for the Book Trust. In that style make it."

"Yes," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "So we will make up a draft on that style. And after the draft is approved, you can tell us which trustees you want."

"Oh, you can select among yourselves," said Prabhupāda. "Why you are taxing me?"

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa mentioned that the three places in India—Bombay, Vṛndāvana, and Māyāpur—were the most important, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Everywhere.” Then he added, “Among yourselves there is no strong man. That is the difficulty.”

“That is a fact,” admitted Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

“All my child,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda—a statement of love but not of relief. “And it requires a very strong man. That is lacking. In every minor detail I have to open my mouth. Anyway, whatever you have got, sit down and select trustees, and that format is there. Make it a trust. Among you Rāmesvara is a little intelligent. Anyway, do your best. Other wise, there is a very, very big undercurrent. They are waiting for your program.”

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa assured Prabhupāda that they would immediately have a meeting—“We will discuss these points.”

“Oh, discussion I have already given you,” said Prabhupāda. “Do it.”

“What I meant,” said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, “is we will execute it.”

“All right,” said Prabhupāda. “Don’t delay.”

At times like this, it became especially clear that the day was approaching when Prabhupāda’s children would have to grow up and lead, manage, protect, and expand his society on their own. These might well be their last chances to learn directly from him and to be close with him for chanting the holy name and dedicating themselves utterly to carrying out his desires for ISKCON. Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed to be doubting whether his children would rise to the occasion, and that expressed doubt impelled them not to discouragement but to determined action to prove themselves loyal and competent.

That evening a GBC committee reported back to Śrīla Prabhupāda that the will had been drafted, with provisions for the protection of all ISKCON properties through specified trustees. Rāmesvara read the will before Prabhupāda, who made only a few comments.

“This will make it impossible for anyone to cheat,” said Rāmesvara.

“Yes,” Prabhupāda agreed, “as far as I can see.” Even regarding matters of utmost concern to him, he sometimes remained quiet. He had directed his GBC men as far as possible, now he mostly wanted the medicine of the holy name. But what they had done was all right, and he was satisfied. As the committee was leaving his room, he softly exclaimed, “Jaya future directors of ISKCON!” And later, when alone with his servants, he shed tears and said he could now leave peacefully.

A few days later the final version of the “Declaration of Will” was notarized in the presence of a lawyer. The document began, “The Govern-

ing Body Commission (G.B.C.) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness," and went on to cover all the points of concern regarding ISKCON properties and management. Most of the twenty-three-member G.B.C. body was still gathered in Vṛndāvana, but their immediate business was completed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's health appeared to be slightly improved, a blessing the devotees and Prabhupāda attributed to the constant chanting. Śrīla Prabhupāda even ate (and digested) some fried food. He also spoke of attempting to resume his early-morning translating work. The G.B.C. men, each of whom had pressing leadership and administrative duties within their respective zones, began to feel the need to return to their posts. Aside from their chanting shifts in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, usually for three hours twice a day, they had no other service in Vṛndāvana. The weather was also unbearably hot, up to 120 degrees. When some of them expressed their plans to return to their areas of work, Prabhupāda gave his permission. They had been together for a week, and now, one by one, they began to disperse. Within another week most of them had left Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Prabhupāda and his small staff remained, and the constant chanting continued, performed by the devotees of the Krishna-Balaram temple.

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As June came in Vṛndāvana, the weather remained very hot. The sky, which had been a clear blue, turned hazy as the first moisture arrived. Between noon and four PM, the ground was too hot for bare feet, and the residents of Vṛndāvana would stay home, confining most of their activity to either the morning or the late afternoon and evening. Even eating was excluded from the midday, since the heat killed the appetite. The Yamunā was shallow and hot, giving little relief. The cows were gaunt from lack of grass and feed, and occasional hot, searing winds raised dust clouds. Flies and mosquitoes died in the air. One of the few pleasant features of summer was the fragrance of *bel* flowers that climbed along the walls around Prabhupāda's garden, somehow thriving in the dry heat.

In the first days of June, Śrīla Prabhupāda experienced some hope of recovery. He asked to resume his morning rides, and when being brought down to the car, he said, "Soon I will get down and walk myself." His old friend from Allahabad, Mr. Ghosh, came and diagnosed his disease as anxiety for the devotees and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed. But he didn't follow the doctor's orders, since they

included having his blood pressure checked regularly, and taking various medicines and special treatments. But by receiving massages from his servants, he felt he was improving. At this rate, he said, he would be all right after a month and a half. But he stressed, "I am not leaving Vṛndāvana until I am well."

One morning Śrīla Prabhupāda asked to go and see the Deities, and his men promptly moved him in his rocking chair before Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma. Sitting in his chair beneath the *tamāla* tree, Prabhupāda looked up at the transcendental brothers, while many tears glided down his cheeks. "They are dressed very nicely," he said. While he basked in the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, he enjoyed the soothing shade of the *tamāla* tree. "The contractor wanted this tree cut down," he said, "but I would not allow. There are not many *tamāla* trees left. These worldly men do not know."

Śrīla Prabhupāda started coming down regularly each morning to see the Deities, an event that gradually grew to become a daily temple function involving ISKCON devotees and guests alike. Prabhupāda would sit in his rocking chair under the *tamāla* tree, and a devotee would lead *kīrtana*, while Prabhupāda and all the other devotees chanted responsively. For Prabhupāda's disciples, chanting with him in the courtyard of his temple in Rāmaṇa-reti, Vṛndāvana, was the essence of the spiritual world.

Although Prabhupāda's body was apparently sick, he was still as alert as ever, and every morning he would notice who was there and who was not. The devotees grew to love this special opportunity to associate with Prabhupāda as he sat in his rocking chair, gazing at Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Vṛndāvana residents and pilgrims would also gather around Prabhupāda, often offering money, which they would place at Prabhupāda's feet. While the energetic young *gurukula* boys danced before Prabhupāda, and the pilgrims continuously flowed in and out, offering obeisances and rupees at his feet, and while one of his secretaries fanned him with a large *cāmara* whisk, Śrīla Prabhupāda sat gravely yet simply, with his attention fixed on Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Sometimes he would go sit in the private garden adjacent to his main room. A devotee had built a plaster fountain there in the shape of a large pink lotus, and while Prabhupāda sat in the little alcove, surrounded by flowering vines, the splashing of the fountain pleased and soothed. An occasional monkey would come over the wall into the garden, looking for something to steal, and Prabhupāda would have it chased away. Otherwise he sat silently, conversing only occasionally with one or two disciples.

One day in the garden Śrīla Prabhupāda was recalling the simple but civilized life he had known as a child. He mentioned the various ceremonies his mother had observed during pregnancy to allay the dangers connected with childbirth. Though his voice was soft and weak, he was still inclined to speak. "So much care was taken for the children," he said. "Now these rascals are killing children. Most uncivilized life. Two-legged animals. Even in these days, in India in the interior villages, their life can be peaceful. They have enough grains, enough milk to live peacefully and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. And they are going there to give this sterilization." (Śrīla Prabhupāda was referring to Indira Gandhi's policy of compulsory sterilization.)

One of the devotees present had just come from West Bengal, where he had been traveling on a boat down the Ganges, preaching and distributing *prasādam* in the villages. Śrīla Prabhupāda began describing to him how in the villages they make a simple bread ball from *attar* (whole wheat flour) and bake it beside an open fire. "The same fire. It is called *khāndi* fire, using cow dung chips," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. "They put one pot upon this fire and use it for *dāl*. Then after some time, you see if it is boiled—very nice. Then this ball should be cooked in *ghee*. It will be first class."

While the fountain splashed gently and the pigeons and green parrots fluttered and chattered, Prabhupāda continued to talk freely. He recalled his horoscope at birth: "After seventy years this man will go outside India and establish so many temples." He said he hadn't understood at first that he would actually have to go, but when he had finally gone to the U.S., he had had no intention of ever returning. Except for the stroke he suffered in the United States in 1967, he said, he would not have come back. "That means Kṛṣṇa desired," he said. "Otherwise, I had no plan to come back. Therefore I took this permanent residency."

"Do you regret having come back to India?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami.

"No," said Prabhupāda. "My plan was like that, to stay. But Kṛṣṇa's plan was different. When I was coming back [in 1970] I was speaking to Dvārakādhīśa [the Kṛṣṇa Deity in ISKCON's Los Angeles temple]. 'I came here to preach. I don't know why You are dragging me back.' That was when I was leaving Los Angeles. I was not happy. But He had His plan."

"Pretty nice plan," commented Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued, "Kṛṣṇa said, 'Come, I'll give you a better place in Vṛndāvana. You were retired in Vṛndāvana, and I asked you

to leave. Now you have to come back. But I will give you a better place.' So He has given me a temple a hundred times better than any other place. Is it not so?"

An article entitled "Śrīla Prabhupāda Seriously Ill" appeared on the front page of *The Times of India*. On hearing the article, Śrīla Prabhupāda commented, "Unless they think Bhaktivedānta Swami is important, they wouldn't print this." Girirāja wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda that many sympathizers had phoned the Bombay temple asking for more information. One of the devotees had issued a statement which *The Times of India* carried a few days later on page three, under the heading "Śrīla Prabhupāda Now Better."

So was Śrīla Prabhupāda "seriously ill" or "better"? "I may live or die," he said, "in either case I am with Kṛṣṇa." But he confided, "I asked Kṛṣṇa to give me enthusiasm to continue up to death. A soldier should die fighting on the battlefield."

At Śrīla Prabhupāda's request, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa was replying to all correspondence and signing his own name as secretary. As he wrote in one letter,

Under the circumstances, it is not possible for me to read letters to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I simply inform him of any good news which comes, and so I have told him of your successful town hall meeting as well as your other preaching activities.

These letters were almost as valuable as Śrīla Prabhupāda's, since they were often filled with direct quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda.

One evening Śrīla Prabhupāda called for all the available *sannyāsīs*. He said he was feeling tired, but like a father happy to have his children with him, he said, "You should all come to be with me like this, and I feel better."

One day while sitting with Śrīla Prabhupāda, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa began to describe the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa as depicted in the painting hanging to the right of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *prasādam* table. The painting showed Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd friends eating lunch. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at the painting and then, closing his eyes and thinking of the *Itāla*, said, "This

is the highest perfection of life. I have concluded that whatever is done without Kṛṣṇa is simply a waste of time. What will they think of this?"

Prabhupāda's moods moved and varied within the realm of transcendental emotions and attitudes. To some of the disciples attending him, he said, "I am thinking, 'I am a worthless person, taking so much service. There is no way I can repay you. I am poor in every respect, financially and spiritually.'"

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa protested, "our only desire is to serve you."

"I know," Prabhupāda replied, "and it is the only reason I am living. All over the world things are going on by your sincere service."

But occasionally Prabhupāda would still reprimand an errant disciple. When, in dressing Prabhupāda, Upendra gave him a *lungi* that was too small, Prabhupāda called him "a fool and a rascal." And when Tamāla Kṛṣṇa did not attend Prabhupāda one morning, due to having a cold, Prabhupāda was critical. "I was never neglectful about my duty in any field of activity," he said, "even business. Dr. Bose loved me very much. He was giving me checks to sign for forty thousand rupees. I was never lazy or neglectful in duty. I would do it honestly and try to make it perfect. Only I was neglectful when I was involved with my young wife. Then I neglected my studies. That was due to circumstances. And then later I neglected my wife. My father said I was fortunate not to like my family. Kṛṣṇa saved me through so many circumstances. This material life is checkered."

Early one morning Śrīla Prabhupāda awoke suddenly. "I had a dream," he said to the devotees attending him. "There was a big assembly of drunkards and chanters. The drunkards were madmen. Some of the drunkards were becoming chanters. They cannot stop fighting. The drunkards were so crazy."

"Were you there also?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"Yes, I was standing there also."

"Were some of the chanters becoming drunkards?"

"Chanters cannot fall down," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Their names are listed—back to home, back to Godhead. They are in Kṛṣṇa's family."

After the G.B.C. assembly in Vṛndāvana, Svarūpa Dāmodara had traveled to Manipur and Calcutta and was now returning to Vṛndāvana to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. As soon as Prabhupāda heard Svarūpa Dāmodara had arrived

he asked to see him. As usual, Śrīla Prabhupāda treated him very specially and gave him much time and attention. From Prabhupāda's first meeting with Svarūpa Dāmodara when Svarūpa Dāmodara had been Thoudam Singh, a Ph.D. candidate in organic chemistry at UCLA, Prabhupāda had taken great care to cultivate their relationship.

Thoudam had grown up in Manipur but after graduating from high school had come to America to continue his education at the University of California. He had been attracted by the devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on the streets of Los Angeles and had visited the temple. When he met Śrīla Prabhupāda, he became convinced that he had met a genuine spiritual leader. At first Thoudam had maintained his stance as a representative of the world of empirical scientific knowledge, and Śrīla Prabhupāda had invited him for morning walks on Venice Beach.

Day after day, Śrīla Prabhupāda would draw Thoudam into arguments about the origin of life. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was ready to argue, he would glance around and ask, "Where is the scientist?" And on catching sight of Thoudam, he would ask, "So, what do they say?" Thoudam would then argue that life had arisen by chance through chemical evolution, and Śrīla Prabhupāda would smash the argument with a stunning display of logic and common sense.

Thoudam, by regularly associating with Śrīla Prabhupāda and by reading the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, had become more inclined to Kṛṣṇa consciousness than to material science, and eventually he had become Prabhupāda's initiated disciple, Svarūpa Dāmodara dāsa. With Śrīla Prabhupāda's encouragement, Svarūpa Dāmodara had soon received his Ph.D. and pledged to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda through scientific lectures and writings against the theories of modern, atheistic science.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was well aware of the powerful sway science held over people everywhere, and he was out to combat their godless propaganda. He knew that *Bhagavad-gītā* was the highest science, and he saw how outrageously prejudiced many modern scientific assumptions were. For all their high technical jargon and faith in the scientific method, the scientists were actually ignorant of the origin and purpose of life.

Svarūpa Dāmodara and a few other devotees holding graduate degrees had formed the Bhaktivedanta Institute and were working within academic circles to establish the scientific basis of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda had been especially pleased when at a large meeting of scientists Svarūpa Dāmodara had challenged a Nobel Prize-winning scientist who held that life was a phenomenon that occurred at a certain level of

chemical complexity "If I give you the required chemicals," Svarūpa Dāmodara had asked him, "will you be able to produce life?" And the embarrassed scientist had replied, "I don't know" Repeatedly Śrīla Prabhupāda had referred to that incident in his conversations and lectures

Śrīla Prabhupāda often praised the work of Svarūpa Dāmodara and the Bhaktivedanta Institute and assured them that the BBT would provide funds for their printing, research, and building projects He had given them the arguments, and they were developing them with scientific language.

Now Svarūpa Dāmodara had come for more association with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and after offering obeisances, he presented Śrīla Prabhupāda with several pink lotus flowers Śrīla Prabhupāda took one in his hand and opened the petals, the others he gave to his secretary for presenting to the Deities Svarūpa Dāmodara had also brought several ripe pineapples, and Prabhupāda immediately asked for a glass of fresh pineapple juice

Svarūpa Dāmodara was arranging for a conference of scientists in Vṛndāvana to discuss "The Origin of Life" He had been meeting with various scientists and professors, many of whom had shown interest in Svarūpa Dāmodara's approach and in participating in the conference Svarūpa Dāmodara read Prabhupāda the prospectus he had prepared announcing the upcoming conference Prabhupāda listened silently and at the end said, "All glories to Svarūpa Dāmodara!" Later in the afternoon they spoke again It seemed that Prabhupāda was never too tired or too indisposed to speak with Svarūpa Dāmodara about defeating materialistic science.

Svarūpa Dāmodara was getting hope from his conversations with scientists He told Prabhupāda, "I think they're interested in the program we are making Otherwise they wouldn't take time to discuss Some of them feel our approach is unique?"

"There is no other such proposal," said Śrīla Prabhupāda "They have taken God as something mystical Especially this rascal Darwin's theory They have become like animals, and they are seeing everyone as animals This rascal has convinced them, 'Your grandfather was a monkey' How could they become the son of a monkey? But this is going on A grand rascal, this Darwin And his theory is taken as the greatest principle of anthropology in the whole world So scientists by combined meeting should speak out against this Darwin's theory"

On the day of Svarūpa Dāmodara's arrival in Vṛndāvana, the first rains also arrived, indicating the end of summer and the start of the monsoons.

Heavy rains beat down while Prabhupāda and Svarūpa Dāmodara continued talking. Prabhupāda said that the Vedic evolutionary theory had been presented in the *Padma Purāna* thousands of years before Darwin.

"If we can get some big scientists on our side," said Svarūpa Dāmodara, "at least a few, that will be enough."

"That I am asking," said Prabhupāda.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa figured that Śrīla Prabhupāda would be tired after two hours of talking, so he interrupted, "Would you like a *kīrtana* party now, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

But Prabhupāda corrected him. "This is *kīrtana* now going on. People have to understand what is *kīrtana*. Any topics on Kṛṣṇa, that is *kīrtana*. Śukadeva Gosvāmī became perfect by *kīrtana* but what kind of *kīrtana* did he do?"

"He was speaking the *Bhāgavatam*," answered Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "You are simply thinking drums and *karatālas* is *kīrtana*. But anything we do here is *kīrtana*. There is no material connection here. We are not talking how to increase our business and enjoy women and wine. That is not our aim. *Ka uttamasloka gunanuradat*. We are trying to establish Kṛṣṇa—that is *kīrtana*. *Śraṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoh*. Do you know this?"

Taking this remark as his cue, Svarūpa Dāmodara went on to speak about scientists he had met who were interested in the proposed "Origin of Life" conference. "I am thinking of the title of our conference," he said, "as a Bhaktivedanta Vijnāna Conference in Vṛndāvana."

"No," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "They will take it otherwise, thinking that Bhaktivedanta is not a *jñānī*. They will take it lightly because Bhaktivedanta Swamī is not a scientist." One of the devotees said that "Bhaktivedanta" actually indicated the highest science, and Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed. But to understand *bhakti* he said, was very difficult for the ordinary man.

"Why not 'Life Comes From Life'?" asked Prabhupāda. And Svarūpa Dāmodara immediately agreed.

"Make something extraordinary," said Prabhupāda. "We are not just some magicians like the other *yogīs*. There is money, intelligence, and I can give you inspiration."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's comments often implied that his bodily condition was of no importance, either to himself or to his followers. And this was

in fact, an important instruction regarding the *guru's* body (*vapuh*) and his instructions (*vanī*) The spiritual master would not always be physically present, but in the form of his instructions he was eternally available for the sincere disciple And that association was as real and personal as physical association In fact, the ecstasy of service in separation was greater The *sastras* state that the body of the pure devotee is spiritual but that his physical presence in the material world is temporary As Śrīla Prabhupāda had said of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, his passing away meant he had gone to serve Kṛṣṇa in another place Śrīla Prabhupāda had instructed his disciples regarding the body of the spiritual master in his book *The Nectar of Instruction*

Being situated in his original Kṛṣṇa conscious position, a pure devotee does not identify with the body Such a devotee should not be seen from a materialistic point of view Indeed, one should overlook a devotee's having a body born in a low family, a body with a bad complexion, a deformed body, or a diseased or infirm body According to ordinary vision, such imperfections may seem prominent in the body of a pure devotee, but despite such seeming defects the body of a pure devotee cannot be polluted It is exactly like the waters of the Ganges, which sometimes during the rainy season are full of bubbles, foam and mud The Ganges waters do not become polluted Those who are advanced in spiritual understanding will bathe in the Ganges without considering the condition of the water

The devotees working closely with Śrīla Prabhupāda did not think he was deteriorating, no matter how he appeared, he was just giving them another opportunity to serve him If he wanted to eat or didn't want to eat, if he was pleased or displeased, if he appeared well or ill, they would respond accordingly, out of duty and love This mood was becoming increasingly prominent as Śrīla Prabhupāda more and more depended on his disciples to help him carry out all his functions He had said he was remaining in the world only to satisfy his disciples' sincere desires to serve him Yet he continued to emphasize that their service to his physical form was not as important as their following his instructions

When two of Prabhupāda's *sannyāsts* were taking leave of him, he smiled pleasingly and said, "I may stay or go, but in my books I will live forever" When he heard that forty thousand hardbound books had been distributed in one week, he said, "If book distribution increases, I will never die. I will be living for centuries" Tamāla Kṛṣṇa remarked that the book

distribution reports were one kind of news that didn't give Prabhupāda a headache, and Prabhupāda smiled broadly. "No!" he said. "It is my life!"

But one day while sitting in the garden with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, Svarūpa Dāmodara, and others, Śrīla Prabhupāda became very disturbed when he detected a mistake in one of his already printed books. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa was reading aloud a verse from the First Canto which began, "*Munayah sādhu pīṣto 'ham.*" Śrīla Prabhupāda had him read the synonyms.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa read: "*munayah—O sages; sādhu—this is relevant; pīṣta—questioned...*"

"*Sādhu?*" asked Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thus he uncovered a thoughtless mistake made by the Sanskrit editors. *Sādhu* means "devotee," not "this is relevant." Śrīla Prabhupāda became very angry and denounced the "rascal Sanskrit scholars." "A little learning," he said "is dangerous. Immediately they think they have become big scholar, thinking, 'I shall arrange!' And then they write all nonsense." He continued speaking about the mistake for half an hour. He was disturbed. He ordered Tamāla Kṛṣṇa to write at once to the BBT and stop these speculations by his disciples—changing his books in the name of editing. The devotees were startled to see Prabhupāda so angry; he was supposed to be peacefully relishing a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reading here in his garden. Such a change was very serious, he said, because it changed the meaning. "Even if the authorized *ācāryas* would make a mistake," he said, "it would not be changed. This is *ārṣa-prayoga*. In this way the *ācāryas* are honored."

By Śrīla Prabhupāda's strong reaction to this one printed mistake, he was again stressing the great importance of his books. "Whatever I have wanted to say," he explained, "I have said in my books. If I live, I will say something little more. If you want to know me, read my books."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was especially pleased by letters he received from Ghanaśyāma, who was distributing books in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe. Ghanaśyāma was a member of the BBT library party, which was systematically traveling from country to country all over the world, placing full sets of Prabhupāda's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in university libraries. In daring forays into Communist Europe, Ghanaśyāma was meeting with success. On hearing his report, Prabhupāda's demeanor transformed. "My books are the real Communism," he declared with enthusiasm. "I am writing for the whole human society. My philosophy is to unite human society on the basis of Kṛṣṇa

consciousness. And that is actually happening. Why is the black man working for me and the white man also? How much potency this boy has. Practically he is preaching in the jungle. The people do not know the language, and still they are giving him standing orders."

Prabhupāda had said that the only real medicine for him was *kīrtana*. And *kīrtana*, he had explained, included preaching around the world. And for Prabhupāda, who was taking so little food, the chanting of the holy name and the *kīrtana* of preaching reports from his disciples seemed to be not only his medicine but his sustenance as well.

On the evening of the day Prabhupāda received Ghanaśyāma's letter, he learned that Gopāla Kṛṣṇa had arrived with copies of several newly published Hindi books. Prabhupāda had been lying in bed, but on receiving the good news, he raised his eyebrows and said, "Bring them immediately! Gopāla Kṛṣṇa entered with the books, and Prabhupāda immediately sat up in ecstasy.

Years ago Śrīla Prabhupāda had begun a large *gurukula* (a Kṛṣṇa conscious primary school) in Dallas, Texas. But when the Texas state government had begun imposing too many restrictions, Prabhupāda advised in 1976 that the boys' *gurukula* be moved to Vṛndāvana, India.

The school should be moved to our new gurukul project in Vrindavana. The facility will be built just to suit the needs of the brahmachari to develop spiritually. To live in Vrindavana is the highest perfection, and to grow up in Vrindavana is the greatest fortune. Even to live in Mathura Mandala for a fortnight guarantees one liberation.

In Vrindavana, no one will place restrictions on the school, and it will be encouraged by the government. Thousands will send their children to be trained as human beings and devotees. The atmosphere in Vrindavana is beyond compare, and the Krishna-Balaram Mandir is the finest in the world.

By June 1977, the *gurukula* building in Vṛndāvana was near completion, and the devotees managing the *gurukula* were contemplating opening the building in the near future. They were discussing how the rooms should be used, including which rooms would be for staff offices and residences. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda had not been consulted on these details, he seemed to know what was going on, and one morning he told his secretary he would like to see the new building from top to bottom.

After taking *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, he was carried in his chair for a tour of the new building.

Pleased with the construction, he remarked, "By Kṛṣṇa's grace everything has been done very nicely." The second floor was one continuous wide veranda with many connecting rooms. "The persons in charge," explained Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "have one room for residence and one for an office."

"Very comfortable," Prabhupāda remarked. He heard and observed everything, occasionally making suggestions—there should be a flower garden and a fountain in the central courtyard. "I think there is no other building equal to this in Vṛndāvana," he said. As they came to the first floor, Akṣayananda Mahārāja, one of the temple managers, pointed out to Prabhupāda, "I want to keep my office here."

"That's nice," said Prabhupāda. "But because we have got a big enough place now, we should not think, 'I shall keep one leg in one place and one leg in another place,' and then the whole thing is mismanaged. Don't do that. Don't misuse even one inch."

"You were saying you wanted five hundred students," said one of the *gurukula* teachers. "So we should keep as much space as possible for the students on the floors."

"Yes, yes," said Prabhupāda. This was the point he wanted stressed.

But then another devotee remarked, "We are going to have administrative offices mixing here, both for the temple and the *gurukula*."

"No," said Prabhupāda, "you have to invite children here. Otherwise what is the use of building such a big building? Not that we have three dozen managers and four students."

Although Prabhupāda's soft voice was sometimes lost amid the noise of construction, and although his comments were made intermittently while being carried from place to place, his message was strong and clear. "Now we have a big facility," he said. "So bring students. That is the first principle."

"We have to get the ISKCON students first," said one of the teachers.

"ISKCON or FISKCON," said Prabhupāda, "bring students." Prabhupāda's word play made the devotees laugh. But he was serious.

"It is a *rākṣasa** civilization," said Prabhupāda. And he began mimicking the cry of a typical street vendor: " '*Do rupyā* ' *do rupyā* '—and no knowledge. Kṛṣṇa says, *tathā dehāntara-praptih*, but all they can understand is two rupees, four rupees. Where they will go in the next life they

* Man-eating demon

do not understand They do not understand eternal life, only how to enjoy this life They don't understand one line of the *Gita*, yet they say, 'I read *Gita*.' This darkness is going on, and people are kept in darkness in the name of so called university education So our *gurukula* will be successful It may take time"

After touring the *gurukula* facility, Prabhupada had the devotees place his chair down once more before returning to his own rooms With most of the resident devotees of the Krishna Balaram Mandir, including *gurukula* students, gathered around him, Prabhupada made his emphatic point "You are thinking of management," he said, "—this manager and that manager and what rooms to utilize. But my question is, 'Who will you manage?' Bring *that* person In Bengali there is a superstition that you should not lie with your head toward the northern side So one man said, 'But I have no head For me what is the question of keeping it to the northern or the southern side?' So your contemplation about management is like that First of all, who will you manage? Simply considering office manager and this and that is not good First thing is bring students Then it will be successful"

That afternoon Śrīla Prabhupāda said he would speak to the *gurukula* staff They gathered in his room, and he instructed them as only he could—he who was empowered to lead the world organization of Lord Caitanya's movement "Our next business," he began, "is to approach the well to do businessmen and tell them, 'Children of your family are expected to be educated with good behavior, good character, and devotion Canakya Pandita says, "What is the use of begetting children like cats and dogs?"' They must be learned and follow the *bhakti marga* We will teach your sons these things' Canvass like that"

In the present society, he said, even the prime minister's son may be a debauchee. The demon Hiranyakasipu hadn't wanted his son Prahlāda to be a devotee but to be like himself, a cheater and a diplomat, and to day's society was comprised of little Hiranyakasipus "But our idea is to create Prahlādas," Śrīla Prabhupāda continued "At least 250 students can be accommodated nicely Throughout India and the whole world you cannot bring 250 students? What kind of managers are you? I say bring five hundred Canvass like this 'I fall down at your lotus feet I flatter you one hundred times kindly hear me' In this way canvass You have to bring students. Not just rooms for management"

Prabhupada said that if the *gurukula* was successful and if ISKCON got more standing in the future, the government could take guidance from ISKCON and not allow people to cheat, claiming to be a *brahmana* or

kṣatriya without the training. "These things are now a dream," Prabhupāda admitted, "but it should be done. I am thinking of so many things. But my life is ending. So keep these ideas. You especially, because you are young men."

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July brought the rainy season to Vṛndāvana. Clouds began building from the beginning of the month, and by mid-July it would be raining daily. The perfumed odor of the *kadamba* flower was heavy in the air, and after a rain, the *nīm* blossoms would give off their onionlike aroma. The peacocks, with their full-feathered tails, became ecstatic, dancing, cooing, and calling. Sometimes a sudden rainstorm would come even while Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting on his bed or at his dictating desk in an unsheltered part of the veranda, and his servants would rush out to move him inside as quickly as possible. Sometimes when rain prevented his using the garden he would recline instead on the little porch overlooking the garden. But at least the 120-degree heat was broken, and the days became more hearable.

Prabhupāda quietly rested and continued his day's routine, waiting to see what Kṛṣṇa desired. He would often wake about six A.M. and open his eyes to see Tāmāla Kṛṣṇa at his bedside. He would then extend his hands, indicating that he wanted to sit up in bed. Tāmāla Kṛṣṇa or another servant would then lightly stroke Śrīla Prabhupāda's back while Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke his mind.

Very few devotees were visiting Vṛndāvana, and guests were rarely allowed to see Prabhupāda. His health was not improving, nor did it seem to be at a crisis point as it had been in May. But because he was hardly eating anything, he was not building his strength. His main treatment consisted of hearing *kīrtana*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

One of the topics which Śrīla Prabhupāda dealt with during these days was the conception of a model universe for a Vedic planetarium. His disciple Ambartīṣa, great-grandson of Henry Ford, had pledged to donate for constructing a gorgeous museum-planetarium in a major city such as Detroit or Washington, D.C. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to present the structure of the universe as it is presented in the Fifth Canto, but so far no one had been able to show how it could be done. The devotees who tried were often baffled in an attempt to reconcile the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* descrip-

tion with the conceptions of modern astronomy. In Bombay, they had brought a so-called Vedic astronomer before Prabhupāda, but he had been unable to make even a simple diagram. Modern scientists give no credence to the *Bhāgavatam*'s account describing the earth as Jambūdvīpa, an island in the middle of concentric oceans and islands. Nor do the scientists find mountains as tall as those described in the Vedic literature. Śrīla Prabhupāda cautioned the devotees, however, not to be guided by their own Western prejudices but to try and understand the universe as described in the *Bhāgavatam*.

And that was extremely difficult. Śrīla Prabhupāda admitted, "When I wrote this, I thought it will not be possible for me unless somebody else helps me."

"How did you write it?" Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked, and Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Kṛṣṇa helped me. I don't know. [He laughed.] That somebody—Kṛṣṇa—helped."

Inevitably the devotees asked, "But how will we explain it to the scientists?"

"We do not require to satisfy the scientists," Śrīla Prabhupāda replied. "We have to describe according to *śāstra*. If they can understand it, then they'll understand it. Otherwise, it is not our business to satisfy the so-called scientists. We are dealing with the real description."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested that the planetarium would spell the downfall of Western civilization.

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "I want to expose that they are cheating. Their only interest is to make money, and for this they cheat. If you can make this planetarium, it will be a grand success, triumphant."

In early July, some of the devotees in Vṛndāvana were working on sketches of the universe according to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. They were puzzled, however, about how to account for satellite photos of the earth, which seemed to contradict the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description. Śrīla Prabhupāda's reply was that the scientists were bound up by their own conditioning and could not go beyond a certain point. When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa reiterated that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s explanation still didn't agree with modern travel around the earth, Prabhupāda insisted that it did.

"You are prejudiced," he said. "You're conditioned with preconceptions of how everything is. It is just like a bull grinding, going around in a circle. He is tied up and simply going around. So everyone is tied up. They cannot go beyond a point, and they cannot move any way they like, just like the bull."

"They have cheated about going to the moon, so how can we believe

them? They want to explain the whole universe, but how can we believe them? Once someone is shown to be a cheater, he will always cheat. A gentleman will say, 'I don't know' But they are not gentlemen. They are loafer class. How can we believe them? They said the world was flat. Then Galileo said it was round, and for this he was almost hanged. They didn't know, and he didn't know. But our knowledge doesn't change, because it is perfect. As soon as there is change, it is not perfect."

A few days later, the committee of devotees returned to Prahupāda and said that the question was still unanswered regarding how the *Bhāgavatam*'s description of Jambūdvīpa could accommodate the fact of traveling west from Los Angeles and reaching India. In reply, Śrīla Prahupāda stressed that they not concern themselves now with such a minor issue. And he referred to the Pacific Ocean as "a drop of water." The descriptions in the *Bhāgavatam* could not be adjusted within the limits of mundane knowledge.

Prahupāda gave the example of how after returning from Vāikunṭha, Nārada Muni had told a simple cobbler that Lord Nārāyaṇa was passing an elephant through the eye of a needle. "Oh, Nārāyaṇa is so great!" the cobbler had said. But an educated *brahmana* had said, "It is simply stories."

Nārada had then asked the cobbler, "How can you believe that Nārāyaṇa was passing an elephant through the eye of a needle?" "Why not," the cobbler had said. "I am sitting under a banyan tree. There are so many fruits, and each fruit contains so many seeds, which will each grow into a big banyan tree."

Śrīla Prahupāda said that with experimental logic one cannot understand the inconceivable. "Everything is inconceivable," he said, "and these rascals want to bring it as conceivable. Don't be puffed up by your so-called education. It has no value."

One day while Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting in the garden bearing some news from his secretary, several monkeys appeared on top of the high wall and looked down at the devotees. Śrīla Prahupāda had often asked the devotees to chase them and once he had even asked that a monkey doll be hoisted by the neck from a tree to frighten the others. But still the monkeys came. Sometimes the sight of a monkey prompted Śrīla Prahupāda to remark about Darwin. One time he talked about how Kṛṣṇa dealt with the monkeys as friends, giving them butter and playing with

them in the forest. As he talked, small chipmunks would run along the top of the wall, and occasionally a pair of green parrots would swoop into the yard, chirping loudly and flittering within the branches of a bush and then flying upwards into the sky above the garden.

Suddenly a large peacock alighted nearby and spread his gorgeous purple, blue, and green feathers, as if posing for the pleasure of the devotees. While a *brahmacārī* continued steadily fanning him, Śrīla Prabhupāda sat silently. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, however, had some business which he thought would not be too demanding for Śrīla Prabhupāda. Sitting at his spiritual master's feet, he broached an important topic.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," he began, "we are receiving a number of letters now from people who want to get initiated. So up until now, since you were becoming ill, we asked them to wait." Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested that since the *guru* has to take on the *karma* of his disciples, and since Śrīla Prabhupāda's health was already weak, he should wait before accepting more disciples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said nothing, and the Vṛndāvana peace was punctuated by the splashing of the fountain. Then he began to speak. He named three of his disciples and said, "So these three can do."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked if devotees in America should write directly to these men for initiation.

"Nearby," said Prabhupāda, and he named three more disciples, leading devotees in Europe. "Five, six men may divide," said Prabhupāda. "Whoever is nearest."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked whether this would apply to both first and second initiations. Prabhupāda said yes.

"So there is no need for devotees to write to you for first and second initiation," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "They can write to the man nearest them. But all these persons are still your disciples. Anybody who would give initiation is doing so on your behalf."

"Ycs," said Prabhupāda.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked if there was anyone in India that Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to do this, and Śrīla Prabhupāda added another name. Śrīla Prabhupāda asked to hear the names he had given, and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa recited seven names.

"That's all," said Prabhupāda. "Now you distribute. For the time being, seven names." Then he added two more. "So without waiting for me," said Prabhupāda, "whoever you consider deserves. That will depend on discretion."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said nothing else, and after a few minutes Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked if Prabhupāda would like to hear a *kīrtana*. Śrīla Prabhupāda assented by a slight gesture, and the chanters, who had been waiting, came to join him.

The next morning Śrīla Prabhupāda added two more names, making a total of eleven disciples who would act as *ṛtīk*, or representatives of the *ācārya*. Śrīla Prabhupāda had not liked the idea of newcomers to ISKCON having to wait unnecessarily long to be initiated. Now initiations could continue regularly at the discretion of his eleven selected men.

July 10

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa received a phone call from Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. The Māyāpur temple had been attacked by a gang of three hundred dacoits (hoodlums). Five devotees were wounded and in the hospital. Bhavānanda Goswami had fired a shotgun at the attackers, injuring two. The police, who didn't arrive until two hours after being called, had arrested Bhavānanda and put him in jail. Śrīla Prabhupāda became disturbed. "If the dacoits attacked and we used our shotgun," he said, "what is wrong?"

Later that day Prabhupāda heard *The Hindustan Times*' version of the attack. According to the news report, some cows had wandered onto the ISKCON property, and the devotees had beaten the cows. This had angered the villagers, who on coming to the temple to complain, had been shot at. Two had been injured. The article named Bhavānanda Goswami and at the end mentioned that the founder of the temple, A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami, had not been present.

Śrīla Prabhupāda heard the article, made a few comments, and went on with his afternoon's writing and translating as usual. But late that afternoon he called for Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "I am afraid of a big conspiracy," he said. "The last line of the article says that the founder-*ācārya* was not present. They were sorry. They would have arrested me and put me in jail."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa scoffed that the news article was one-sided. "That doesn't sound right," he said, "that the devotees beat the cows. Devotees don't beat cows."

Within a few days, a letter came from Gopāla Kṛṣṇa giving the facts of the Māyāpur incident. About fifty Muslim men were stealing crops from the ISKCON land. When Nitāi-cānda tried to stop them, they attacked him, cutting his head in three places. Later, while he was being treated in the temple infirmary, the men came and beat Nitāi-cānda and stripped

one of the ladies naked. Meanwhile, another 250 men attacked, breaking the gates, cutting phone and electric wires, and destroying the water pumps. Wanting to scare the mob, Bhavānanda had fired a shot in the air, but when they did not disperse he fired another shot, injuring two men.

In the meantime, the attackers had broken both hands of one of the *gurukula* teachers and beaten many other devotees. Two hours later the police arrived and recommended the devotees go to Krishnanagar police station—twenty miles away—to file a complaint. When the devotees had reached the station, they had been arrested, and the two seriously injured devotees were denied medical treatment. Bhavānanda Goswami was still in jail. Prabhupāda said it was a plot to drive away the Hare Kṛṣṇa men. "They want that all Bengal be completely godless," he said.

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested that this incident would hurt their village preaching, Prabhupāda replied, "No, it will be to our favor very soon. I think the central government will take action. This is the same as Kāṁsa against Kṛṣṇa—Kṛṣṇa must win. No one can defeat Kṛṣṇa. If I had been there, they would have charged that I ordered the shooting and arrested me. Now I am an old man, I cannot take an active stand. So you all must do everything carefully."

Prabhupāda continued to think and comment on the incident. "The *guṇḍā** class doesn't like Caitanya Mahāprabhu," he said. "They say Caitanya Mahāprabhu made people emasculated. In Orissa they say that after Mahārāja Pratāparudra met Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he lost his *kṣatriya* strength. He was very powerful king, but after he met Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he became effeminate."

"What is our reply to that?" asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"What can you reply?" said Prabhupāda. "If they conclude something like that, they have no idea of spiritual life. They say this is disruptive, Lord Caitanya's saying, *na dhanam na janam*. We *don't* want these things, and they want them. So how can you reply to such people? Everyone wants this, and we say that we don't want it. How can you make a compromise with such people? In your country also they say, 'What is wrong with illicit sex? What is wrong with intoxication?' They say we are brainwashing. Is it not? It is very difficult to push on this movement. Still we are doing. That is Kṛṣṇa's grace."

Seeing that Śrīla Prabhupāda was disturbed, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested, "Will you try to translate this afternoon, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

* hoodlum

But Prabhupāda continued on the same point. "A young, beautiful woman comes at the dead of night to see Haridāsa Ṭhākura, to offer her body, and he denied. Who will appreciate this?"

"We appreciate," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"You appreciate," said Prabhupāda, "but in the modern world, who will appreciate?" Prabhupāda continued pointing out the irrevocable split between the devotees and the nondevotees: "Their idea is that a young man cannot live without a young woman, and yet Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, 'Oh, you are after a young woman? That is more dangerous than drinking poison!'"

As Prabhupāda spoke of the Māyāpur devotees who had been willing to sacrifice their lives for Kṛṣṇa, he became choked with emotion and began to cry. "Kṛṣṇa will give them protection," he said, "our Māyāpur men." He mentioned how Haridāsa Ṭhākura had also been put into jail and beaten and how Prahlāda Mahārāja had been tortured, until Lord Nṛsiṃha had appeared. "Don't be worried," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, crying, and speaking as if all his Māyāpur devotees were directly in front of him. "Kṛṣṇa will protect you. We are doing our best as far as our intelligence goes. Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted that in every nook and corner of the world this movement should be pushed. We are limited."

In an attempt to ease Prabhupāda's sorrow, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa started reading the latest report from Ghanaśyāma, who was distributing books in Eastern Europe. The report of extraordinary success drew Prabhupāda's attention away from Māyāpur. He smiled and said, "That is dynamic."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa continued reading the report.

Everywhere we go people either know about you or they are very eager to find out about Kṛṣṇa and yourself by reading your books. Anyone who has distributed your books in the Communist countries will support my claim that nowhere in the world are people more appreciative of your books

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa looked up from the letter and commented, "He has been everywhere, Prabhupāda, and he says that your books are more appreciated in the Communist countries than anywhere else in the world."

"Yes," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "they are hungry."

A few days later a full, on-the-scene report came in the mail from Jayapataka Swami in Māyāpur. The local Hindus of Māyāpur were outraged at what had happened and were mobilizing mass petitions in support of

the ISKCON temple. Although the newspaper reports were false, gradually people were learning the facts Jayapatāka reported vivid details of Bhavānanda and other devotees being marched through Navadvīpa in chains on their way to court and the people of Navadvīpa offering them respects The devotees were still in jail, he said, constantly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa

On the whole, the report was optimistic *Prasadam* distribution was continuing in Mayapur, book distribution in West Bengal was increasing, and the preaching parties were well received wherever they went Śrīla Prabhupāda's prediction was coming true the incident was turning in the devotees' favor He commented that the enemies had thought they were digging up a garden snake by attacking Kṛṣṇa's devotees, but they were finding that they had in fact unearthed a cobra

July was a good month for Śrīla Prabhupāda's work on *Śrīmad Bhagavatam* He continued dictating very early in the morning and in the afternoon, completing chapters Eight and Nine of the Tenth Canto It was his great pleasure to do so Working on *Śrīmad Bhagavatam*, he was completely transcendental to his physical condition, despite the accompanying heart palpitations and despite his faint voice and general weakness Even to sit was difficult, and yet once he began working, nothing could stop him

Speaking into the hand microphone of his dictating machine, oblivious to his bodily condition, Prabhupāda described patiently and methodically how Nanda Mahārāja's family priest, Gargamuni, performed the name giving ceremony for baby Kṛṣṇa In his purports, Śrīla Prabhupāda often spoke from his personal experiences and realizations

This is the mission of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and devotees also have the same mission One who executes this mission of *para upakāra* performing welfare activities for people in general, is recognized by Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as being very very dear to Him (no co *tasmān monuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya kṛttomah*) Similarly, Caitanya Mahāprabhu has advised this *para upakāra*, and He has especially instructed the inhabitants of India On the whole, the duty of a pure Vaiṣṇava devotee is to act for the welfare of others

Sometimes sitting in the predawn open air on the second floor veranda

and sometimes in the humid heat of bright afternoon, Śrīla Prabhupāda worked, describing the limitless Vedic knowledge, just as his predecessors, the Gosvāmīs and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, had done when worshiping Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya while living in Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, was the first great *ācārya* to make Kṛṣṇa conscious literature available to persons of all countries throughout the world, regardless of birth status or previous character. Even as he composed the latest chapters of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, thousands of young men and women were working on his behalf to preach the Vedic message to the world. His disciples were, in fact, keenly aware of how Śrīla Prabhupāda was producing the Tenth Canto purports in Vṛndāvana, and they prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa that he be allowed to continue for many years, so that he could complete the entire *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

In explaining the infant pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda described an entirely transcendental mode of consciousness, beyond material designations of babyhood or old age.

All these pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and the great enjoyment exhibited by the mothers, are transcendental; nothing about them is material. They are described in *Brahma-saṁhitā* as *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*. In the spiritual world there is anxiety, there is crying, and there are other feelings similar to those of the material world, but because the reality of these feelings is in the transcendental world, of which this world is only an imitation, mother Yaśoda and Rohini enjoyed them transcendently.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was now rendering a particularly sweet part of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, and with relish he described Kṛṣṇa's stealing butter and feeding it to the monkeys and His showing the universal form to mother Yaśoda. In describing how the vision of Kṛṣṇa's universal form was beyond mother Yaśoda's comprehension, Śrīla Prabhupāda shed light on all incomprehensible situations—including his own.

She [mother Yaśoda] could do nothing but offer obeisances to the Lord. One should not try to understand the supreme cause by argument or reasoning. When we are beset by some problem for which we can find no reason, there is no alternative than to surrender to the Supreme Lord and offer Him our respectful obeisances. Then our position will be secure. This was the means adopted in this instance also by mother Yaśoda. Whatever happens, the original cause is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the immediate cause cannot be ascertained,

let us simply offer our obeisances at the lotus feet of the Lord. Mother Yaśodā concluded that the wonderful things she saw in the mouth of her child were due to Him, although she could not clearly ascertain the cause.

Śrīla Prabhupāda made deep and joyful appreciations of the pure devotion of mother Yaśodā for baby Kṛṣṇa, and he described her as the emblem of all pure devotees of the Lord, especially the residents of Vṛndāvana, who love the Lord in spontaneous affection. "The pure devotees who inhabit Vṛndāvana," he wrote, "do not possess any bodily conception." Such pure devotees were fully dedicated to the service of the Lord in sublime affection, *prema*. This had been described by Lord Caitanya, he said, as the highest perfection of life, pure love in relationship with Kṛṣṇa. "And mother Yaśodā," Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, "appears to be the topmost of all the devotees to have attained this perfection."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was concerned that what he wrote be published and distributed; it was his service to his Guru Mahārāja. And he received great satisfaction in hearing that book distribution was still expanding all over the world. Harikeśa Swami, the G.B.C. of northern and Eastern Europe, reported that he was printing a very large quantity of books in thirteen languages. After hearing only the beginning of this report, Śrīla Prabhupāda exclaimed, "All the blessings of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja on you! You are the most important grandson of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Go on doing like this."

In a similar mood, Śrīla Prabhupāda pushed his G.B.C. secretary for India, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, to produce Hindi books faster and in greater quantities. Whenever Gopāla Kṛṣṇa came to visit Śrīla Prabhupāda without a new publication, Prabhupāda would reprimand him for his slowness. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa therefore began a policy of visiting Prabhupāda only when he had a new book to present. In mid-July, when Gopāla Kṛṣṇa brought a copy of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Part Two, in Hindi, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted it happily and said, "Twice now unless he brings some book he won't come, because every time I criticize him: 'Where is the book? Where is the book?'"

July 20

Abhirāma arrived and reported to Śrīla Prabhupāda about Mayāpur. There was nothing new in his report. Later, Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired

from Tamāla Kṛṣṇa why Abhirāma had come. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa explained that Abhirāma had decided to take up business but was undecided which city to work in—perhaps Bangalore or Bombay.

Later, after Śrīla Prabhupāda had retired for the night and was laying in bed under his mosquito net, he again called for Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda was concerned that Abhirāma not drift away from the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement on the plea of looking for business. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that he himself had lived independently in *grhastha* life and so had Bhaktivinoda Thākura. "But our aim was different," he said. "When these neophytes remain aloof from the temple connection, without attending the functions, gradually they will be lost."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa replied that for that very reason he had suggested to Abhirāma that he make his business in Bombay. "Actually," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "I find the *grhasthas* have no desire to live independent of the temples." He explained that in the Bombay temple the *grhasthas* could get apartments near enough to the temple so that they could attend the *mangala-ārati* and other functions.

"Yes," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Unless these things are continued, the *karmīs'* poison will spoil them. He can do independent business. There is no harm. But he must be connected with devotional service." Śrīla Prabhupāda had not moved his body while talking, but he had turned his head slightly. Now he laid his head on the pillow.

"Just like Abhirāma constructed that house," Prabhupāda continued. "That's all right. It is within the campus. There is no harm. But if now he goes away after so much training and advancement, if they are lost, then that's a great loss for the society. With great difficulty we make one Vaiṣṇava. And again if he goes, like Śyāmasundara, then it is a great loss. The whole idea is to give up attachment for the material world and increase attachment for Kṛṣṇa. That is perfection. Now according to one's position, it can be done gradually. But this is the aim."

Śrīla Prabhupāda told Abhirāma that by doing a business in Bombay, he could benefit by living near the temple. "*Grhasthas* should not be dependent on the society," he said. "At the same time they should not be independent of the society." Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed at the apparent contradiction. "This is the position," he said. "Our society cannot take charge of a family. There will be so many numbers of families. How we will support? At the same time, if they remain independent of the society, without touch, then the *karmīs'* poison will infect them." Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded that the solution for the *grhastha* was either to get an apartment

near the temple or to live in the temple, if possible. “They should not live completely independent,” he said. “That will be future danger.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda said he wanted ideal Kṛṣṇa conscious *gṛhasthas*. “Just like Bhaktivinoda Thākura,” he said. “There are many. I was *gṛhastha* also. There was Deity worship, everything nice. I was publishing *Back to Godhead* as *gṛhastha*. So the aim of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was there. I could not leave family life because of certain circumstances. That is a different thing. But I must be in touch with devotional service as in the temple. If you live nearby the temple, it is easier. Or in the temple. But if he remains aloof, that is dangerous.”

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa brought up some problematic details of *gṛhasthas* living in the temple buildings, Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed to his main point and said, “Anyway, these things have to be adjusted. You cannot follow very rigidly in the case of *gṛhasthas*. Somehow you have to adjust. We cannot allow them to be lost.” Prabhupāda saw with alarm that after much training, a *gṛhastha* couple could be lost simply because they disassociated themselves from the temple. It would be a great loss, and in an attempt to avoid it, he was instructing one of his G.B.C. representatives. Prabhupāda said unless this danger was curbed, “then the future of our society becomes hopeless.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s servant Upendra was also present, and he asked Prabhupāda about a man’s responsibility to maintain his wife and family. A man should not marry, said Prabhupāda, unless he had the power of maintaining his family. He should not expect the temple to. “Why should we maintain a *gṛhastha*?” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “And where is the means? But these things are all to be adjusted. I can give you the idea.” Then Prabhupāda gave the example that if a *gṛhastha* was maintaining the Deity worship gorgeously in the temple, that was also preaching, and the temple could consider maintaining such a man’s family.

“So the guiding principle,” said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, “should be that under no circumstances should anyone become lost.”

“Yes,” said Prabhupāda. “Or else, where is the preaching? It will be like Alexander the Great. He was conquering, but as soon as he went to conquer a new place, the last place was lost. Suppose I have conquered Bombay. Then I go to Karachi, but in the meantime Bombay is lost. That was being done by Alexander the Great. When there is no proper management . . . Just like the British Empire was lost in that way. They could not manage.”

“So similarly we should not expand too quickly,” suggested Tamāla

Kṛṣṇa, "unless we have the proper management."

"I am therefore stressing book selling," said Prabhupāda. He wanted to impress upon his leaders the main outlines of his program, and it should be their duty to carry these programs out. "At least don't make me Alexander the Great in my lifetime," he laughed. "They say to me, 'You are great, great, great.' But don't make it small while I am living."

"Or after," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "We'll never make you that way. We should never do that."

"Then," said Prabhupāda, "that's my request. People recognize I am great. Don't make me small. I'll not give you much trouble, but I am now invalid. What can I do?"

"It seems like even if you are invalid," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "it gives us more opportunity to serve you."

"Thank you," said Prabhupāda. "What can I do?" He laughed softly and said, "I have to give you that opportunity."

"It seems that it is your mercy to us," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"All right. Go on," said Prabhupāda, dismissing them.

"Jai, Prabhupāda. Thank you for all your merciful instructions"

July 22

In the morning, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa told Prabhupāda that on the following day Lord Jagannātha would travel down Fifth Avenue in New York City. "Lord Jagannātha is very kind to the *mlecchas*," Prabhupāda said. "Oriyans are mostly *mlecchas*, but still they are made *pājārīs*. One devotee criticized an Oriyan, and Lord Caṭanya slapped him: 'Why do you criticize My servants?' Just see His kindness! I prayed to Kṛṣṇa, 'Anyone who has given a little service, please bless him.' And Kṛṣṇa actually does. He doesn't forget any service done."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa inquired, "Doesn't Rādhārāṇī also pray like that to Kṛṣṇa?"

"Yes," said Prabhupāda, "Rādhārāṇī says, 'I am not sincere. Here is Your real servant.' That is *maha bhāva*. Kṛṣṇa becomes a servant to His servant. Therefore a disciple's first duty is to be submissive to his guru."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "all your devotees are very much grateful to you."

Śrīla Prabhupāda suddenly became immersed in thoughts of his devotees, and he became very ecstatic. Closing his eyes and rocking his head, he spoke with a choked voice and tears. "Oh, your intense love for

me. I am living for you. All over the world everything is going on—money is coming and being spent—and I don't have to worry. I am so much indebted. And I am taking so much service from you all."

"It is we who are indebted," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "There is no way we can ever pay this debt to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

"That is a *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*," said Prabhupāda. "I am beating from this room, and the sound goes ten thousand miles away. Our enemies are surprised: 'How this man is still going on?'"

Śrīla Prabhupāda went on appreciating how people in so many cities were enjoying the Ratha-yātrā festivals, seeing Lord Jagannātha, and dancing and chanting. He remembered past Ratha-yātrās, such as in 1969 in San Francisco, when some of the devotees were dancing joyously around a tree. He began recalling many other past wonderful experiences in ISKCON.

Toward the end of July, Prabhupāda's health seemed to be worsening again. And again he mentioned that the end might come at any moment.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa had been acting as Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal secretary for six continuous months, and he had become Prabhupāda's eyes and ears and his spokesman, especially in dealing with ISKCON management. And he had also become a personal confidant, assisting Śrīla Prabhupāda in his transcendental moods. As a sincere servant, he now began suggesting a different remedy. Śrīla Prabhupāda had recently been feeling and expressing intense devotion toward his disciples in their preaching. Taking this as a cue, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested that if Prabhupāda could travel to the West and be with his disciples there, he would find new life.

"But if I die," said Prabhupāda, "I want to do so in Vṛndāvana." Tamāla Kṛṣṇa replied that Śrīla Prabhupāda should not think of dying. If he would go on a tour of the West, see the devotees there, take *prasādam* made from food grown on the ISKCON farms, then certainly he would respond to such devotion and regain his appetite and strength. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa pointed out that when Śrīla Prabhupāda had been feeling like this in May and the G.B.C. had come, he had responded to their reciprocation of love by increasing his own desire to live.

"One thing you can do," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "In your daily routine, you can pray to Kṛṣṇa, 'If You want him to stay, please cure him, and if not, please take him away. We are fully surrendered to You. Now it depends on Your desire to keep him alive or let him leave this world.'"

Śrīla Prabhupāda was pointing out that he was not a victim of some mundane moroseness robbing him of a will to live. He had already said that he would be with Kṛṣṇa in any case. Staying in this world or leaving it was not up to him, but up to Kṛṣṇa. He recited the prayer of King Kulaśekhara from the *Mukunda-mālā-stotra*: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, please let me die immediately so that the swan of my mind can be encircled by the stem of Your lotus feet. Now while I am still strong. Otherwise, at the time of my final breath, when my throat is choked up, how will it be possible to think of You?"

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa persisted in his affectionate line, however, insisting that Śrīla Prabhupāda could not think of leaving. There was so much unfinished business for Prabhupāda in this world, such as personally seeing to the installation of the Deities of Rādhā-Rāsavihārī in the Bombay temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda admitted it was so and added, "Another ambition I have is that the populace is suffering from agnosticism. The rascals are suffering, but they do not know why I want to drive away agnosticism from the world." Tamāla Kṛṣṇa assured Śrīla Prabhupāda that if he were to go to the West, agnosticism would be driven out. The devotees were already working hard on Śrīla Prabhupāda's instruction. But if they could have his physical presence, they would increase their preaching unlimitedly. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa no longer kept himself only in a passive role, waiting for the spiritual master to ring the bell and then waiting to hear what he wanted. Now he was trying to persuade Śrīla Prabhupāda to travel, and as Prabhupāda began to consider it, he became enthusiastic.

"When I am in Vṛndāvana," said Prabhupāda, "it is transcendental. That much mercy Kṛṣṇa has shown me. And wherever there is our center, that is also Vaiṣṇava—New York, Los Angeles, Paris, or London."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa offered an itinerary: a visit to London, staying at the Bhaktivedanta Manor, and also seeing Rādhā-London-Īśvara; then to New York and seeing the devotees in the ISKCON skyscraper with Rādhā-Govinda; then to the farm in Pennsylvania; and then Los Angeles, where he could see the new dioramas of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

"To remain in Vṛndāvana is a sentiment," Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed. "In New York if I die you will have to entomb me on the roof," he joked grimly. "There is no other room. If I die, as long as I die among you, you are all Vaiṣṇava men. I had a dream that Vaiṣṇava men came to take me. They were all white men with shaven heads. Your countrymen cannot believe how you have changed."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that they should consult an astrologer to see

whether it was auspicious for him to travel and whether he would be cured and how long he would live. "I was born in the evening at four PM.," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "It was Nandotsava. You can consult an old Pāñjikā to see the day. It was a Tuesday. I am prepared to go to the West."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa then quoted from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Two, verse 37, where Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna to fight: "Either you will die and achieve the heavenly planets or conquer and enjoy the earthly kingdom." Śrīla Prabhupāda said the verse was appropriate. Throughout the night and the next day he considered the traveling proposal and mentioned to his other servants, "Tamāla is arranging a big party."

"I was praying to Kṛṣṇa, 'What is this slow death?' " Prabhupāda told Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "Then you quoted that verse. At least my disciples will know I came at the risk of my life. They are the future hope. I must enthruse them. Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna, and I am Arjuna's servant. I am not so limited to think that this is my country. Everything is Kṛṣṇa's. Why should I limit Kṛṣṇa?"

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa gave encouragement: "When you get there, with so many devotees who are giving their lives for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness and assisting you, it will really be enthrusing. And you won't have to speak so much. It's your presence—your seeing the devotees and them seeing you. So in that sense, it won't be exhausting. It's a good climate now, too—August—in London. It's a very good time."

Prabhupāda turned to Upendra and said, "His words are making me feel different. Just hearing, I become enthusiastic."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "by going West I know you will recover."

"May Kṛṣṇa fulfill your words," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. He spent the rest of that afternoon hearing *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* readings from various devotees. At one point he began to express great bliss and said, "Read *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* always to me! These three books.* There is no comparison in the world. I may boast like this. I am fortunate to be able to present these books throughout the world, and people are accepting them even blindly."

After a day had passed, Śrīla Prabhupāda considered the travel proposal more seriously and mentioned some of its defects. He said that wherever he went, his physical condition would go with him.

"But here you have not been translating lately," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

* *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and *Bhagavad-gītā*

"Who says I shall never again translate?" Prahupāda countered. "Every action has some relaxation and then activity again." Prabhupāda said that according to allopathic medicine, the only hope for him was to enter a hospital and undergo intensive medical treatment. According to Āyur Vedic medicine, however, there were specific medicines. As Prahupāda sat on his balcony speaking with his secretary, he wore sunglasses. He would wear them even late in the day or in a darkened room. To his disciples, this was another source of worry—that he appeared to be having problems seeing. Such things made the prospects of traveling to the West seem doubtful. Why couldn't he just stay in Vṛndāvana, some of the devotees reasoned, where everything was arranged for his convenience?

The devotees had sent messages to three astrologers, and all the reports returned that same afternoon. Some of the reports offered absurd remedies without knowledge of Śrīla Prabhupāda's position, but all of them agreed on one point: the next two months would be the most difficult of Prahupāda's life, and traveling should be avoided. One astrologer recommended Śrīla Prabhupāda wear a blue sapphire.

"So it is not hopeless," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, after hearing all the reports. "At least for the next five weeks, keep me very carefully. For the time being, no travel. Secure this blue sapphire, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa."

On the last day of July, the governor of Tamil Nadu, Sri Prabhudas Patwari, who was visiting Vṛndāvana, paid a short visit to Śrīla Prabhupāda. The governor could only stay half an hour, but Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke energetically with him the entire time. When Śrīla Prabhupāda explained his condition of health, the governor at once invited Śrīla Prabhupāda to come to Madras and stay at the Raj Bhavan (governor's mansion), where he said the best doctors in the whole of South Asia were available. But Prabhupāda, rather than prolong the discussion about his body, used his bodily condition as an example to preach the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"After all," he said, "so long we have got this body, then *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-śyādhī* [birth, death, old age, and disease] we have to accept. This is the statement of *Bhagavad-gītā*. So the human endeavor should be to stop this repetition of birth and death. When Viśvāmitra Mahārāja went to see King Daśaratha, the king inquired, *punar-janma-jayāya*: 'You are a great saintly person trying to conquer over birth and death. Is your process going on nicely?'"

Prabhupāda then used the example of his bodily condition in a different way, to illustrate the concept of *varnāśrama-dharma*. He compared the *brāhmanas* to the head, the *kṣatriyas* to the arms, the *vaiśyas* to the belly, and the *śūdras* to the legs. "If they are all in good condition, then the health is all right," said Prabhupāda. "Now at the present moment I am suffering because my belly department is not working. So we cannot neglect any department. There must be all departments, and they must be cooperative and healthy. This movement is meant for that purpose. It is the duty of government to give us protection."

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned the devotees' recent difficulties in Māyāpur and asked for protection. "We'll do it no doubt," Governor Patwari replied. "I'm meeting the prime minister tomorrow, and we are going to discuss that matter." The governor acknowledged that the reports in the newspaper were distorted. He asserted that Madras had a good atmosphere for religious work, and he mentioned several *svāmīs* who were doing good work. Of one he said, "He is making good propaganda about *Gītā* everywhere."

"There are many persons making propaganda," said Prabhupāda frankly. "But if you don't mind my saying so, all these men are in ignorance of what is the real meaning of *Gītā*." *Bhagavad-gītā*, he said, should be understood as it is, and it should be adopted especially by the *rājārṣis*, or government leaders.

Again the governor said how nice it would be if Prabhupāda would come to Madras. Prabhupāda seemed to consider it seriously and thanked the governor. Finally, Prabhupāda requested help in getting the permanent residency in India for some of his disciples. "They will never do any harm," he said. "They will never take part in politics."

"I know it," said the governor, "I know it."

"So kindly try to help," said Prabhupāda.

Later, when Prabhupāda mentioned he was fifty-percent decided to go to Madras, he and his servants began discussing the merits of travel to Madras and other places in the world. Although he could not move even a few feet without assistance, if Kṛṣṇa desired he was willing to travel.

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July of 1977 was special for pious Hindus, and the people of Vṛndāvana spent extra time in reading scriptures and visiting holy places. So by the end of July, when the trees and bushes were freshening with green leaves, pilgrims came in crowds to Vṛndāvana and to the Krishna-Balaram

Mandir Despite the mud and the rain, many of the people were in a jubilant mood, relieved from the oppressive heat and anticipating Jhulana yatrā, the swing festival of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. Jhulana yatrā was Vṛndāvana's biggest festival and would occur in mid August this year

The local newspapers were giving reports on Śrīla Prabhupāda's health, and a genuine concern for his well being prevailed throughout Vṛndāvana and surrounding villages. Therefore, because of the festival season as well as out of concern for Śrīla Prabhupāda, many people were coming to the Krishna Balaram Mandir. Those who came around nine A.M. got to see Śrīla Prabhupāda when he went for his morning *darśana* of the Deities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda still had no appetite and had scarcely eaten during the past six weeks. He was no longer regular in his times for sleeping, taking massage, or sitting up and translating. Feeling himself to be at a critical period, he had given permission for the devotees all over ISKCON to recite a simple prayer: "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, if You desire, please cure Śrīla Prabhupāda." He would regularly go before the Deities each morning. Wearing his dark sunglasses and sitting erect in the rocking chair, he would hold his palms together in a gesture of prayer, while two men, one in front and one behind, carefully carried the rocker from Prabhupāda's room into the temple room. They would set the chair down first before the Deities of Gaura Nītai, then before Kṛṣṇa Balarāma, and then before Rādhā Śyāmasundara. Then they would carry him to a central spot in the courtyard, under the *tamāla* tree, and set his chair down on the black and white checkered marble floor.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would sit facing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and the devotees would sit down around him and begin a *kīrtana*. As the *kīrtana* began, two *guruṭula* boys would rise and come in front of him, where they would begin dancing with arms upraised, their cotton *cadars* swinging back and forth. Prabhupāda would usually not speak or even smile, but after a few minutes would give his garlands to a devotee, who would place them around the necks of the dancers. Soon two other young boys would come forward, and the first boys would garland them with the garlands they had received from Śrīla Prabhupāda and sit down. For half an hour, the dancing and singing continued. Guests to the temple would gather, many of them offering money at Prabhupāda's feet, which rested on an embroidered silk cushion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was gaining resolve to go to the West. One of the

astrologers had said that by the fourth of September, after checking with a physician, Śrīla Prabhupāda could undertake travel—but for health only. "I will go there to our Pennsylvania farm," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, and he appeared hopeful. He didn't consider the astrologers absolute guides; he had consulted them more out of curiosity. Astrology was part of the Vedic knowledge, but the modern-day practitioners were often dubious. When Abhirāma came from Delhi with a report from a new astrologer, Śrīla Prabhupāda heard it, while continuing to chant intently and silently on his beads.

"His main point, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Abhirāma, "was that for six months there is trouble, especially in the first week of September and then again on certain dates in October and November. The longevity is eighty-two years, five months, and eleven days, which means February 28, 1978. This is according to birth and stars arrangement. But he made it very clear that due to the hand of Kṛṣṇa this could be changed. And if you can pass through 1978, then he sees four or five years ahead clear."

When the report was finished, Śrīla Prabhupāda was quiet for a few minutes and then said, "By calculation the age is finished. That doesn't matter. Rather, if I am finished now, it will be glorious."

"Living will also be glorious," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"Yes," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Let us see as Kṛṣṇa desires." Other horoscopes also showed an inauspicious time ahead, due to the entry of Saturn into the eighth house. Śrīla Prabhupāda took this to indicate that his condition was most critical. In either case—whether according to the stars or according to Kṛṣṇa—who could change destiny? Everything was in Kṛṣṇa's hands. But Śrīla Prabhupāda was still inclined to tour the West. "If I can work a little more," he said, "our society will be very strong. I want to see that what I have done is made still stronger."

Prabhupāda's talk of travel, however, coincided with increasing weakness. He talked less. When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa tried to encourage him to translate, he replied, "When I get inspiration, I will take it up. Don't try to force me. I am going through a difficult time and am now feeling restless. It is not mechanical."

The Jhulana-yātrā pilgrims were mostly villagers. Many were from Rajasthan, the men and women wearing bright colored clothes and the women wearing heavy gold and silver bangles and bracelets, which clanked as they walked barefoot on the roads. The numbers of mendicant *sādhus* also increased, and they became a common sight, with their ash- or clay-

covered hodies marked with brightly colored *tilaka*. The Yamuna had flooded in many places and was too swift for bathing or swimming. Thousands of visitors came to the Krishna-Balaram Mandir, which was now one of the most popular temples in all of Northern India. The evening *ārati* at Krishna-Balaram was so crowded that resident devotees couldn't attend but could only stand in the back of the courtyard at the edge of a packed, jostling crowd. Some of the *gurukula* boys would greet the guests with Hindi *Back to Godhead* magazines, each boy selling two or three hundred magazines a night. Śrīla Prabhupāda was glad to hear this.

A few of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples from the West also arrived just to be with him, hoping to render some menial service. When Prabhupāda received them in his dark, cool quarters, he was sitting up on his bed. One of the arrivals, Madhudviṣa, had left Kṛṣṇa consciousness for more than a year but now came before Prabhupāda shaven-headed and wearing Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*. "Don't leave us," said Prabhupāda feelingly. "You can stay as *gṛhastha*, but don't leave us."

To Satsvarūpa, Prabhupāda said, "I like your magazine [*Back to Godhead*], especially the article 'Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out.'"

Śrutakīrti, who had come from Hawaii, showed Prabhupāda some candles they were producing and selling, and Prabhupāda laughed. "You Westerners," he said. "There is no scarcity of money. But now I have taught you how to spend it." For more than half an hour, Prabhupāda went on talking pleasantly.

Later, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa told the devotees that Prabhupāda's outlook seemed to change, depending on the people around him and the news he received, and he told them of Prabhupāda's plans to go to the West.

That evening, when Śrīla Prabhupāda called for "Tamāla and the others," the devotees gathered and went up to Prabhupāda's balcony, not knowing what to expect. Śrīla Prabhupāda was lying on his bed. "Sit down," he said. "I want simply to see you all. It gives me vital force." Mercifully and lovingly he looked upon his devotees as they sat around him. The air was filled with frankincense billowing from the pot of coals Upendra had prepared for keeping mosquitoes away. Evening *ārati* began in the temple, and the sounds of the *kīrtana* rose to the little balcony. One by one the men present began to massage Prabhupāda. Śrutakīrti and Satsvarūpa were each massaging a leg, while Tamāla Kṛṣṇa massaged

Prabhupāda's head. Another devotee fanned. Prabhupāda lay back with his eyes closed peacefully. "You are all Vaiṣṇavas," he said. "Be merciful to me."

Śrīla Prabhupāda frankly wanted to hear good news. It inspired him to continue. He didn't want to hear other news. His secretary would read him letters in the afternoon, and Prabhupāda began allowing the other devotees to be present. Once when they entered his room he said, "If in this world there is one Vaiṣṇava, he can deliver all the world."

"You are that one Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Satsvarūpa.

"You become," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Each of you. Why not?"

"We can try," said Guru-kṛpā Swami.

"Yes, try," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "But follow. Do not imitate."

"Today we have a letter about book distribution," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "the monthly report."

"That is the real good news," said Prabhupāda, and he listened with full attention as Tamāla Kṛṣṇa read the BBT newsletter. He was pleased and absorbed, sometimes shaking his head and smiling to hear the achievements of his disciples. Then he heard a long letter from Ghanaśyāma about his triumphant book distribution in Eastern Europe. When he heard a letter from Tulast dāsa, who was developing a Kṛṣṇa conscious farm community in South Africa, he commented, "This letter makes my chest swell, that I have such disciples performing such activities."

In another letter, a devotee wrote a prayer stating that all his God-brothers were praying for Prabhupāda, and he hoped that Kṛṣṇa would respond. "Surely," said Prabhupāda, "I am practically living on your prayers. I haven't eaten in the last six months. So I must be simply living on your prayers." And hearing in a letter from South America that devotees were praying for him, he said, "I think I will have to stay. Kṛṣṇa is very kind. He is *bhakta-vatsala*. So many devotees are praying, it cannot be frustrated. I think this is why I am feeling inspiration to go out. In this condition, anyone else would prepare for death, but I am going on a tour. I don't think of it as sentiment. Kṛṣṇa is actually present as the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. I am not without Vṛndavana wherever I go to our temples."

Pañcadraviḍa Swami wrote that he would exchange his youth for Śrīla Prabhupāda's old age. "We are the same age," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "The body has nothing to do with the *ātma*. In the Vaikuṇṭha world, we

are the same age. New life, new boys—*nava-yuṣṭana*. The outward dress does not affect one." As a further reply to Pañcadraṇḍa, Prabhupāda dictated, "May Kṛṣṇa give you long life, and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You are our future hope."

For the devotees who had not been with Prabhupāda in months, it was like old times, sitting with him and hearing him answer letters and give advice for becoming victorious in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Hearing him discourse made everything all right. But as they were leaving his room, he said softly, "These are my last days."

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa got an especially dynamic report from Hamsadūta Swami in Sri Lanka, he decided to bring it to Śrīla Prabhupāda early in the morning. Prabhupāda had just finished his bath and was sitting upstairs on the balcony, just before his nine-thirty *darśana* in the temple. He wore a *tulaśī* garland from Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma as well as a fresh flower garland. He reclined on a round bolster pillow and listened.

Hamsadūta's letter contained news of a debate he was having with a famous atheist in Colombo, a Dr. Koor. As soon as Tamāla Kṛṣṇa began to read the letter, however, Prabhupāda asked to hear Dr. Koor's response. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa then began reading from a news clipping enclosed in the letter.

"Das and Swami asked whether scientists can make a chicken to come out of a plastic egg," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa read. "I do not know whether they are aware that scientists have made over ten elements, such as fermium, plutonium, einsteinium—"

Prabhupāda interrupted, "Raseal. You are simply producing empty sound. Where is the chicken, raseal? The chicken, the hen, is better than the scientist. She has produced another egg within a week. You simply say this and that, this and that, this and that, that's all. What is your value? We don't give you any value. You are less important than the chicken."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa resumed reading: "We have created over ten elements that even God—"

Again Prabhupāda interrupted. "Who cares for your creation? Without your creation the egg is there."

"No, he says," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa went back to reading the text, "even God could not create them, because He did not know the technology involved in making them."

"God kicks on your mouth," said Prabhupāda. "He doesn't require to take your creation. Without your creation He can do everything. God kicks on your mouth with shoes. Talkative nonsense. Tell him like that."

"I'm sure Hamsadūta did," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "Next we'll read his reply. Anyway, the scientist goes on, 'Are these two men aware of the success of the Sri Lanka scientist Dr.—'"

Prabhupāda: "Who cares of his scientists?"

"The Nobel Prize—winner in synthesizing amino acids—"

"Nobel Prize—winner," scoffed Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Another rascal has given him a Nobel Prize. He is a rascal, and another rascal has given. *Sūti-sākṣi matta*. In a liquor house the witness is a drunkard. If there is an incident within the liquor shop and the proprietor of the liquor shop has brought some witnesses, but all of them are drunkards—what is the value of that? As soon as you are drunkard, immediately you are rejected."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa read on, and Prabhupāda continued to interrupt him at almost every sentence. The devotees had not seen Prabhupāda so fiery in weeks. When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa read Hamsadūta's reply, Prabhupāda was pleased to see how many of the same points his disciple had made. "He is putting very strong arguments," said Prabhupāda. "This is preaching!"

Two factors were making Śrīla Prabhupāda indecisive about going West. One was the worldly formalities of passport and U.S. residency card, and the other was Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal hesitancy, based on reports from the astrologer. His health was, of course, the main factor, but at times he seemed ready to disregard everything and order his servants to somehow take him to London. Already he had sent Abhirāma to Calcutta to deal with certain complications. His U.S. residency "green card" had expired, and the Consulate in Delhi had insisted that he come for an interview. Meanwhile, Prabhupāda's passport and a temporary visa were being readied and would take four or five days. One of the Āyur Vedic doctors who sometimes visited told Prabhupāda he should wait a week or so.

But Prabhupāda found simply working up the will for travel, and then not going, and then deciding again to go, was exhausting. On hearing the latest news, that the U.S. Consulate insisted on an interview—which seemed to be a physical impossibility—he couldn't rest. Lying on his bed for hours, he finally called Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and said, "I want to go. Can you arrange to carry me? Somehow or other take me. Here I don't expect any good Psychological enthusiasm is there. Don't be afraid. I am not

afraid. Either to die in the temple here or there—it is all *Vaikunṭha*.”

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked to first discuss this with a few of the G.B.C. men who were present, but when the devotees came into Prabhupāda's room that afternoon, Prabhupāda said, “No discussions. I have made up my mind. Arrange immediately for going.”

But again there were complications. The doctor asked Śrīla Prabhupāda to wait another week, and Prabhupāda also did not want to leave India without his green card for the U.S. He sent Balavanta to Calcutta to try and get the green card. With so many matters unsettled, Prabhupāda remained undecided whether to go to England now or wait.

“I plan to stay in America,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said. “I will not come back until I complete the *Bhāgavatam*. I want to organize there. The American boys are so nice. If I make everything strong, then the movement will endure. Let us go now. The doctor will say four days for the medicine to act, then wait a little longer. This is their method.”

Finally a report came from Abhirāma in Calcutta that the passport had been secured and the American Consulate in Calcutta would help in getting the green card. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa ran upstairs and told Śrīla Prabhupāda, “There is very good news.” Śrīla Prabhupāda was lying down in bed, but when he heard the news he began to slowly clap his hands, saying, “Give me good news and keep me alive!” He began to think ahead to London. “The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities there are so nice,” he said. “Rādhā-London-īśvara—an innocent boy, He is.” Tamāla Kṛṣṇa reminded Śrīla Prabhupāda how they had obtained those Deities.

“Yes,” said Prabhupāda, “it was unexpected. I was in a hopeless condition, but Kṛṣṇa said, ‘Here I am. Take Me.’” Śrīla Prabhupāda thought of the Bhaktivedanta Manor. “That lawn before my room is magnificent,” he said. “I think good time is coming. Madbudviṣa has come, and Gaurasundara has come—lost child has come. These are good signs.” As he spoke on, his voice, which had sounded at first small and weak, grew in strength. “Mistake there may be,” he said, referring to the fall of some of his disciples. “But it can be rectified. At the time be very careful not to commit mistakes. Kṛṣṇa never forgets a person who does a little service.”

“You also never forget, Prabhupāda,” said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

“How can I forget? You have all helped me to execute the mission of Lord Caitanya and my Guru Mahārāja. I always pray to Kṛṣṇa to give you strength. I am insignificant. I cannot do anything. But I pray to Kṛṣṇa to give you strength.” Prabhupāda recalled how after installing the Deities in Australia he had thought, “These *mlecchas* and *yavanas*, what will they

do with the Deity?" Then the next time he went there he saw that they were worshiping nicely. "Try to do everything nicely," he said, "and Kṛṣṇa will help. Whatever I have done has been done on this principle. Whatever my Guru Mahārāja taught me, I tried to the best of my capacity to carry out."

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke on, carried by waves of transcendental emotion and carrying his loving disciples with him. "When I go to America," he said, "especially Los Angeles and New York, I feel at home."

At the mention of New York, he began to remember his first days there. "I was like a street boy," he said. "I was going here and there, sightseeing. I was in New York City, but one morning I saw all the walls were white. 'How have they become white? Who has whitewashed them?' I thought. I went downstairs, and there was so much snow. I went with an umbrella and purchased a pack of milk in the snow. At that time I was living in a dungeon. It was always dark. But I didn't care. Whatever difficulty, I didn't care. I only wanted to preach. Sometimes people would touch me, like men on the Bowery, but no one was inimical. Everyone was friendly. Even the bums. When I went to enter my New York building, the bums would get up from where they were lying down and let me pass by. I couldn't understand the difference between friends and enemies."

Prabhupāda said a friend of his had been shocked to hear that he was moving to the Bowery. "Oh, Swamiji," his friend had said, "you have gone to Bowery Street? It is a horrible place!"

"I passed through many dangers," continued Prabhupāda, "yet I couldn't understand that, 'Here is danger.' Everywhere I thought, 'This is my home.'"

Śrīla Prabhupāda recalled random details of his first preaching endeavors at 26 Second Avenue. "I was working very hard," he said. "Lecturing at seven in the morning and seven in the evening. Cooking and distributing *prasādam* to anyone who was coming. Do you remember, Satsvarūpa? You would bring some mango and fruit. Daily you would come. Those days are passed. Now I feel happiness remembering those days. Remember that boy Stryadhīśa? He would eat so many *capātīs*. He would never have enough. Every time he wanted more I would give him four *capātīs* at a time. Kīrtanānanda, Acyutānanda. Seventy-five people would attend that Sunday feast."

Prabhupāda recalled the first San Francisco temple, the first Los Angeles temple, going to Seattle, pushing Gaurasundara to go to Hawaii, receiving a letter from Govinda dasi in Hawaii who said that it was mango season,

except that when Prabhupāda went there, "it was rat season, and all night the rats were running in the rafters."

"This is a new life, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "There is no doubt about it." His thoughts returned to his upcoming tour, and he said he could sleep in three seats across in the airplane. But he cautioned the devotees to be careful that once he got to America he not get kidnapped. Previously he had considered that Kṛṣṇa may have been detaining him from going to the West so that he would not be disturbed by the demons. But now he would go in any case.

Prabhupāda was ready to leave, but the delays and anxieties persisted. Balavanta returned from Calcutta, but Śrīla Prabhupāda was not pleased to see him. Why, he demanded, had he come back without Abhirāma? Balavanta said he had wanted to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda and he thought that Abhirāma could handle the last steps of getting the green card. Prabhupāda reprimanded Balavanta, saying service to the *guru* was better than being with him.

Then Tamāla Kṛṣṇa left for Delhi to arrange for the tickets. When two days later Śrīla Prabhupāda learned that there might be a delay of several days before Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and the other Americans in the party could leave India, he said he could leave immediately, without them, taking Śrutakīrti as his servant.

Then Prabhupāda heard of an airport strike in London. And the night before his scheduled departure, his health worsened. Many devotees urged him not to go. But amazingly, the tickets and passport arrived, and at midnight on August 28, after a six-month stay in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda and his party left from the front gate of the Krishna-Balaram Mandir and headed for Delhi in a caravan of cars.

Just as Prabhupāda was leaving, Bisan Chandra Seth, a friend of Prabhupāda's in Vṛndāvana, had come and protested, "It will not be good if something happens and you leave your body outside of Vṛndāvana." Prabhupāda told Mr. Seth that, because his disciples were so much in love with him, he could not easily refuse their request. If the trip became too difficult, he said, he would return immediately. He told Mr. Seth that he was simply depending on Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda rode lying on a mattress in the back seat of his car, and after two hours of driving over roads greatly damaged by flooding, they reached Delhi airport. Śrīla Prabhupāda waited in the car. The early morning was warm, and the devotees opened the car doors. Bhavananda Goswami, who had just been released from jail in Bengal, had arrived

in time to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. Bhavānanda approached the car and placed his head on Prabhupāda's feet.

"How are you?" Prabhupāda asked. Bhavānanda reported that everything was improving in Māyāpur. All the local *sādhus* and citizens were now siding with ISKCON against the hoodlums who had attacked the temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was moved to an airport waiting room prior to going through the customs formalities. About ten devotees were there to see him off as he left with his party of four: Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, Upendra, Pradyumna, and Pradyumna's wife, Arundhatī. Śrīla Prabhupāda sat upright on the airport couch, silently fingering the beads in his bead bag. His bare feet, resting in his sandals, were slightly swollen, as were his hands. He looked to see who was present and slightly nodded to each disciple in recognition.

The devotees felt there was no need for Śrīla Prabhupāda to talk. Just being with him was wonderful and fully satisfying. He had already spoken to them fully and had given himself in his books in many other ways. So they chanted and looked lovingly at him, up until the last moment when he went by wheelchair onto the plane.

CHAPTER NINE

At Home in Vṛndāvana

During the long flight, Śrīla Prabhupāda remained solemn. His servants were helpless to alleviate the difficult situation, as they might have in Vṛndāvana, and cigarette smoke, loud talk, and drunken laughter surrounded them. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, despite his concern, did not know what to do for Śrīla Prabhupāda or what to ask him. Śrīla Prabhupāda had often expressed a dislike for conversations with questions like “How are you feeling?”

Prabhupāda’s servants knew that they could not fully understand their spiritual master’s thinking, and the scriptures also warned that one should not attempt to understand the mind of the Vaiṣṇava. But they knew their service was to relieve him—by arranging for quiet, by assisting him in bathing and dressing, or by taking him to the temple for *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma. Now, however, they were helpless to perform any of these tasks. Now, more than ever, Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Kṛṣṇa’s hands. Earlier that year, in Bhubaneswar, he had said that his disciples, although willing to help, could not change the situation if he was inconvenienced by old age. And he had even given the example that although he might be in his opulent quarters at the Bhaktivedanta Manor, that did not mean he would not suffer inconvenience. But Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, being very sensitive to Prabhupāda’s desires and experienced in serving him, several times moved over and spoke with his spiritual master.

“Śrīla Prabhupāda,” he said, “when you get to London the devotees will be so pleased to be with you.”

“Yes,” Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “it is good that we are going.” Otherwise, Śrīla Prabhupāda was mostly silent, meditating on Kṛṣṇa and his

mission of bringing love of Kṛṣṇa to the world

The flight turned out to be an unusually exhaustive ordeal. When the plane landed in Rome it was delayed there for four hours, and Śrīla Prabhupāda had to wait in the airport lounge. When finally they arrived over London, the captain announced that they could not land yet due to the strike, and so they continued circling for hours. Finally, twenty hours after leaving Delhi, the plane landed at Heathrow Airport.

Customs and immigrations officials and the British Airways ground crew allowed Śrīla Prabhupāda, in a wheelchair, to quickly pass through all the formalities. And soon he was amid a throng of enthusiastic disciples and then sitting in a white Rolls Royce en route to Bhaktivedanta Manor.

The London airport and the busy highways leading into the city are certainly a great contrast to the peace and spirituality of Vṛndāvana. But for Śrīla Prabhupāda to suddenly leave the climate and transcendental culture of India to fly to the West was not unusual. He had been doing that, going from East to West, from north to south, from one nation to another—to the snowlands, to the tropics, to the cities, to the jungles, mixing with white people, black people, and Orientals—at an almost constant pace for years. He was no Hindu village *guru* suddenly astounded to see hundreds of automobiles racing on the highway or to see factory smoke or skyscrapers or the blind rat race of the meat eaters. There was no question of “culture shock” for Śrīla Prabhupāda.

But there was a shock for his disciples in London, who had never imagined that he would be so thin or that anyone could travel in such condition. For the devotees who had been at the airport to meet him, it had been a heart-rending experience. Even those who had heard the reports of Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana were not emotionally prepared for such a change. Prabhupāda was as transcendental as ever, or even more than ever, but the devotees were shocked at first to see him so different. Now he appeared like a powerful sage who had been undergoing long austerities for the benefit of humankind and who had become transcendental to his body, although living within it.

At Bhaktivedanta Manor, Śrīla Prabhupāda went from the car to a palanquin and entered the temple room, where about three hundred disciples and well-wishers were waiting to be with him. Devotees from all the ISKCON centers in northern and southern Europe had rushed to England on a last minute notice. They were holding *kīrtana* for Śrīla Prabhupāda as he entered, and they, too, like the devotees at the airport, were deeply shocked. And for a moment, when they saw Śrīla Prabhupāda wearing his dark sunglasses and appearing so thin, the *kīrtana* almost stopped.

Yet they simultaneously remained joyful and ecstatic, realizing that despite such difficulty, he had actually come to the West to be with them and encourage their Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They had been praying for him for months. The prayer, "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, if You desire, please cure Śrīla Prabhupāda," had been printed on a banner and hung over Prabhupāda's *vyāsāsana*.

The devotees of England, wanting to reciprocate with Śrīla Prabhupāda with more than just the sentiment of their words, were also leading the world in transcendental book distribution. When, a few weeks ago, they had heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda might be coming to England, it hadn't seemed possible, considering his physical condition. They had heard he might leave his body at any moment, but then later they had heard he was better and he was coming to London. Even when they had heard he was definitely coming, they had been incredulous. But now it had come true.

The Deity room curtains were open, and Śrīla Prabhupāda beheld Rādhā-Gokulānanda. Some devotees stood in front of him, and with a small gesture characteristic of his hand, he waved them aside. Without any change of expression, he sat with concentrated attention facing the gorgeously dressed Deities of Rādhā-Gokulānanda, whom he had named four years ago when calling for Them to come and be worshiped here by the devotees of England.

Without saying a word, Prabhupāda went up to his room, where as many devotees as possible joined him. He had always said he felt comfortably at home in these quarters, and once again he was pleased to see outside his window the large lawn, the lake, and the ducks. The devotees sat before him with their palms folded, aware that this was no casual meeting. They had already offered their lives completely to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and there was nothing more they could offer in words that would equal their dedication.

A devotee placed a large silver plate full of *prasādam* on the table before Śrīla Prabhupāda. He picked up a milk sweet and tasted it, then a piece of mango. The hundred devotees who squeezed into the room and looked in from the doorway watched his every movement with fixed attention. There was complete silence. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda looked up, smiling.

"So," he said, "is everyone all right?"

"Jayz, Śrīla Prabhupāda!" was the warm reply. The tension of seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda's different appearance suddenly melted, and everyone simply wanted to make him feel comfortable and to please him with their service.

For the rest of the day Śrīla Prabhupāda remained alone, resting. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa lectured to the devotees in the temple room, explaining how Śrīla Prabhupāda had decided it was better to travel, even at such a great risk, than to be invalid. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa told how someone had suggested Śrīla Prabhupāda go to Tehran or Italy or France, because of the airport strike in London, but how he had said, "I want to go to London." Śrīla Prabhupāda has come to take shelter of you, said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. He said that, according to *sāstra*, a devotee should stay in Vṛndāvana, especially at the end of his life, but because Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master had ordered him to go to the West and preach, he had returned, determined to fulfill that mission until the last.

The devotees were deeply touched that Śrīla Prabhupāda's coming was at least partially in recognition of their preaching. They resolved to reciprocate with him while he was there by holding a book distribution marathon. If they showed him their dedication by preaching, maybe he would stay a long time.

At two o'clock the next morning Bhagavān and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa went into Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters to attend him. Śrīla Prabhupāda, who had just awakened, was very pleased to see Bhagavān, his leader from southern Europe. This was why he had come to the West: to be with his preachers, and to be encouraged by them.

"Tamāla has brought me with great difficulty," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "It was the correct thing. I thought, what is the use of dying? Better to come. So Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma has placed me in the care of Rādhā-Cokulānoda."

Bhagavān presented Śrīla Prabhupāda with some newly printed books: an Italian *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, another volume of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in French, and other books in Dutch. The total book distribution in Europe, Bhagavān reported, had surpassed that of America.

"Tamāla, did you hear that?" Prabhupāda asked. "This is my life. Come here." Śrīla Prabhupāda began rubbing Bhagavān's head, and tears fell from his eyes. "You have no problems," he said to Bhagavān. In his own work on Śrīla Prabhupāda's behalf, Bhagavān had been encountering a rough period, but when Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "You have no problems," he took it that if he persevered, everything would be all right. As long as he stayed engaged in devotional service he had no problems. For Bhagavān, there was no need for Prabhupāda to say more; Prabhupāda's order was already his heart and soul. But now that order and Śrīla Prabhupāda's love entered deeper into his heart. Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood was one of pure thankfulness, without his usual critical instructions. He

simply wanted to be with his devotees and encourage them.

“Produce books,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “These books are all the mercy of my Guru Mahārāja. No author throughout the world has written so many books—Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens. Neither their books have been so widely read or with such appreciation.”

When Prabhupāda came down to the temple in the morning, all the devotees were able to be with him. “Devotees here are all Vaikunṭha men,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda, “—good-looking and nice-dressing. Gokulānanda is so beautiful. I shall be glad to die in that condition—amongst the devotees and seeing Gokulānanda.”

The devotees had come to see that Śrīla Prabhupāda actually looked very wonderful in his dark sunglasses and freshly pressed silk *dhott* and *kurtā*, with clean, clear Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* on his forehead. He would come gliding down the stairs on the palanquin carefully carried by two able-bodied disciples, and he would sit on the *vyāsāsana* and watch them perform *kīrtana* of the holy name. Since he rarely spoke, the *kīrtana* and his appreciation of it was the main exchange between him and his disciples.

Externally, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave very little indication of even appreciating the *kīrtana*. Those who were standing or dancing near to him, however, could see behind his glasses the tears sprinkling from the corners of his eyes and onto his cheeks. And all the devotees chanted and danced, rejoicing in the knowledge that Śrīla Prabhupāda simply wanted to be with them. They knew that although he was a pure devotee and self-satisfied, he could actually be inspired by his disciples’ affection. By their intense enthusiasm to serve and praise Kṛṣṇa under his order, he could become enlivened to stay in the world longer and preach.

The devotees in the Manor agreed that Rādhā-Gokulānanda seemed to be looking especially at Śrīla Prabhupāda, and he was looking especially at Them. Some felt that by witnessing Śrīla Prabhupāda and Rādhā-Gokulānanda, they were looking directly upon the spiritual world, seeing Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotee. Therefore, there was no need for talks or demonstrations further than what Śrīla Prabhupāda was giving everyone by coming to be with them in the temple room.

Each morning the *kīrtanas* would build enthusiastically. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked that devotees not sing the *guru-pūjā* song because it created too much emotion for Śrīla Prabhupāda, so they chanted the Pañca-tattva *mantra* and then Hare Kṛṣṇa. After half an hour, the singing and chanting

would be fervid, and Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes tap his thumbs together. Just this slightest movement of his body increased the intensity of the *kīrtana*. Then with the raising of one finger, Śrīla Prabhupāda set the whole roomful of hundreds of devotees into jumping ecstasy. The devotees felt that by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing they were somehow singing and praying for Śrīla Prabhupāda's good health and continued life. Śrīla Prabhupāda would sit, unmoving. But the devotees knew his desires, and many of them continued jumping several feet into the air, almost touching the chandeliers. After a wild transcendental hour of *kīrtana* Śrīla Prabhupāda would go upstairs again, carried over the heads of the devotees on the palanquin.

When the devotees in London heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda was getting many invitations to go to America, they began to worry. They were thinking this would be the last time they would see him, and they wanted to keep him with them forever. If they could distribute an incredible number of books, then maybe he would live longer and stay longer at Bhaktivedanta Manor. They were already feeling privileged that Śrīla Prabhupāda had chosen their temple out of all others, and as they spoke among themselves, they concluded that Rādhā-London-Īśvara and Rādhā-Gokulānanda must be Prabhupāda's favorite Deities. They realized that aside from chanting and serving, there was nothing they could do to help Śrīla Prabhupāda and keep him with them, and this inability made them helpless. Despite their efforts, everything was up to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda confided to his secretary that he was disturbed by thoughts of India, and that he had no wish to go back. "In India," he said, "whatever project I made the government has simply given me obstacles. I had to tax my brain so much." India, he said, had lost its culture. "Now they think everyone is God, and they do not understand *bhakti*, the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. From the members of Parliament to the members of the street, everywhere there is suspicion that I have brought the CIA. Such a mistake they have made!"

Since Śrīla Prabhupāda had come to London, his emotions were much more noticeable than before. Where he would have checked his emotions before, he now did not or could not. He frequently cried in ecstasy. Because he was saturated with love for Kṛṣṇa, at any moment his tears might come—while hearing a *kīrtana*, seeing the Deities, hearing of a devotee's service. The tears would pour down his cheeks, making his visage more

beautiful At other times, he would utter a long, deep “Hmmm,” not out of physical pain, since he said he was quite all right, but out of his Kṛṣṇa conscious emotions, the ecstasy of his love of God

After a few days, Śrīla Prabhupāda got a good report on the progress of his US residency Balavanta had gone to Washington, DC, and now phoned to say Śrīla Prabhupāda would have no difficulty in getting his expired residency renewed All the officials Balavanta had contacted were friendly and invited Śrīla Prabhupāda to return Tamāla Kṛṣṇa conveyed this while Śrīla Prabhupāda sat on a mat, his frail body being massaged by Upendra Instantly tears welled up in Śrīla Prabhupāda's eyes, and with a choked voice he said, “America has been so good to me to give me money, men, everything I have no designation that ‘this is my country,’ but because they have given me so much facility, I cannot forget my obligation to them I want to make them happy, and through them, the whole world”

Śrīla Prabhupāda looked forward to traveling to America shortly after Janmāṣṭamī, which would fall on September 6, two weeks from the date of his arrival in England “I want to live a little longer,” he said, “to make everything more perfect”

“Will you do this by enthusing the devotees by staying with them,” asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, “or is there a specific program?”

“A specific program,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda “I want to introduce *varṇāśrama* At our Pennsylvania farm, the biggest problem of life is solved food”

Letters from Ghanaśyāma in Eastern Europe had brought Śrīla Prabhupāda repeated pleasure When Ghanaśyāma came to England, therefore, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa brought him before Śrīla Prabhupāda Calling him near, Prabhupāda stroked his head “This is the *paramparā* system,” he said “My Guru Mahārāja pushed me, I am pushing you, and you are pushing others It is like a train” The following day, at Tamāla Kṛṣṇa's request, Ghanaśyāma came in and read his latest report—which was lengthy—to Śrīla Prabhupāda He explained some of the difficulties in his preaching and how he was getting around them But Prabhupāda's mood had changed, and he reminded his disciple that the credit was all due to Kṛṣṇa

When Harikesa Swami, the GBC secretary for northern and East Europe, arrived, he entered Prabhupāda's room and offered prostrated obeisances. Śrīla Prabhupāda, his eyes overflowing with tears, reached out and rubbed his disciple's head, and Harikesa also began to cry.

Harikesa explained that he was setting up his own press for producing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in European languages. "Very good," said Prabhupāda. "As a father likes to see his estate nicely managed, so I am like that. Get places and print books."

Harikesa Maṇārāja had brought with him most of the book distributors from Germany, and he arranged that they meet privately with Śrīla Prabhupāda. The men, most of whom had never been with Prabhupāda, gathered in his room and sat in overwhelming appreciation of the moment. Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted, *yare dekha tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa upadeśa*, and then asked, "So what is this *kṛṣṇa upadeśa*?" At first no one replied, but then one of the boys spoke and said, "One should preach everywhere."

"No," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "what is *kṛṣṇa upadeśa*?" Then again there was a silence. This time another boy recited, "*Sarva-dharmāṇa parityaṅga māṁ ekam saraṇam vraja*." * Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted that and spoke for a few minutes about surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Thinking it an opportune moment, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa brought out a package of color photographs just arrived from Los Angeles. It was a complete story in pictures of the recent Los Angeles Rathayātrā. The pictures were brightly colorful eight by ten inch enlargements, and as Śrīla Prabhupāda saw one after another and heard the descriptions from his secretary, he began to make long low humming sounds, and tears came to his eyes.

Earlier that morning as soon as he had awakened, Śrīla Prabhupāda had begun spontaneously speaking about the Rathayātrā he had performed as a child in Calcutta, and now he was seeing the pictures of a grand procession and festival conducted by his disciples. Seeing the photo of the chariots with a large crowd following, Śrīla Prabhupāda raised his eyebrows and said, "We have never seen such carts!" Another photo showed long lines of people waiting to see the "Changing Bodies" exhibit, a diorama depicting the transmigration of the soul. "I told you this would happen!" Prabhupāda exclaimed. "I am very much glad to see this." Śrīla Prabhupāda remained so affected by seeing the Rathayātrā pictures that he wouldn't take his usual massage. "Not now," he said in a choked voice.

* Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me [Kṛṣṇa]. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

and he sat meditatively, silent for two hours.

On Janmāṣṭamī day Śrīla Prabhupāda rode in a rented Rolls Royce to the temple at Bury Place in downtown London to see Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-London-īśvara. Entering the building in a palanquin, Prabhupāda came before Rādhā-London-īśvara and slowly removed his sunglasses, his eyes flooding with tears, while around him devotees chanted his name and the names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. On the way back to the Manor, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa recited to Śrīla Prabhupāda the many pastimes of Prabhupāda's preaching days in London.

The next day was Vyāsa-pūjā, Śrīla Prabhupāda's eighty-second birthday. Again, upon waking he recalled his childhood and how an uncle had called him Nandulal, because he was born on the day Nanda Mahārāja gave presents to the *brāhmaṇas*, the day after Kṛṣṇa's birthday. Śrīla Prabhupāda went down to the temple, and after a fully exultant *kṛtana* by hundreds of devotees, he accepted, without tasting, a three-tier, five-foot-long birthday cake. He noticed that the devotees had only used eighty-one candles, due to counting age by the Western method, so another candle was added. At Śrīla Prabhupāda's request, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa stood and spoke.

The next day Śrīla Prabhupāda's health suddenly became much worse, and he couldn't come down to the temple. This was the first crisis since his coming to England, and suddenly his plans changed. Instead of going on to the United States as he had planned, he now requested that he be taken back to India. He spoke of Bombay. "If I live a few days more," he said, "let me see the opening of the Bombay temple. We can wait here and then fly to Bombay. I have worked so hard for it. If I see the opening and then die, it will be a very peaceful death. Even if I live, I can come back here."

The health crisis seemed to pass, but Śrīla Prabhupāda now felt he would be unable to go to New York. He asked to hear the various astrological calculations. "Let us have a laugh," he said. The readings predicted that these would be the most difficult days.

For many of the devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda's not going to America upset their hopes of his getting better and living a long time. But Prabhupāda felt he had traveled as far as he could, and now he should return to Bombay and Vṛndāvana. For a few days more he stayed, waiting for a clearer indication from Kṛṣṇa. And he resumed going to the temple in the morning.

Brahmānanda Swami had come from Africa, and Śrīla Prabhupāda watched with pleasure as heavy-set Brahmānanda, the first disciple to dance for him eleven years ago in New York, rose to dance again before his spiritual master. As Brahmānanda jumped up and down, dancing ecstatically, Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled and clapped his hands.

Afterwards, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked Śrīla Prabhupāda what he had prayed that morning as he had sat looking intently at the Deities. Prabhupāda replied, "I was praying to Rādhā-Gokulānanda to please engage me in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rasavihārī."

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to return to India, and his desire was his servants' order. "If I survive this time," he said, "we shall do Vṛndāvana *parikrama*. You can carry me on a palanquin."

At the airport there were delays. During the wait, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa put earphones on Śrīla Prabhupāda so he could listen to a tape-recorded *kīrtana*. Prabhupāda slowly rocked his head, listening, until finally he was allowed to board the aircraft, riding in a wheelchair.

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September 14

With no disruptive incidents, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived with his party in Bombay, where he was promptly escorted from the plane into a waiting car and driven to Hare Krishna Land at Juhu. This time the elevator worked, and Śrīla Prabhupāda reached his quarters on the fifth floor and went at once to bed.

He called for Girirāja, who came and sat on the floor beside the bed. Prabhupāda told him how in Vṛndāvana, Mr Somaiya, a very important man of Bombay known to both of them, had come to see him in bed and had started to cry out of sympathy. Prabhupāda then told Girirāja of his pleasant stay in London, especially mentioning the *kīrtanas*, which he said were wonderful. When Girirāja asked if the chiseling and hammering and other noises of temple construction in Bombay were going to disturb him, he replied that it was like music. He then lay back and rested.

When Prabhupāda awoke at the end of the day, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked him if the noises were bothering him. "These sounds do not disturb me at all," he replied, "because I am thinking that work is being completed. You can note the distinction, how in London I was feeling restless, but here not. It is because I like Bombay. Of all the cities in India, I like it the most."

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to get reports from some of his *sannyāsī*

disciples in Bombay. He heard good news from Gargamuni Swami of his party's selling complete sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and also other books to libraries and universities throughout India. Now they were preparing to go into Muslim countries to sell books. "Whoever preaches in the Muslim countries," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "I take the dust of his feet on my head." Lokanātha Swami told Śrīla Prabhupāda of his success in traveling to Indian villages in a bullock cart. Śrīla Prabhupāda loved it.

Within a day or two of his return to India, Prabhupāda had abandoned the simple regimen he had agreed upon with a doctor in England. The doctor had said Prabhupāda was a difficult patient. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa mentioned that when he had told the doctor that Śrīla Prabhupāda was trying to cooperate, the doctor had said Śrīla Prabhupāda's only compromise was to wait until Friday instead of Thursday before traveling. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a little laugh and said, "And then I went even earlier—Tuesday. Supercompromise. I could understand when he wanted blood that he would begin his allopathic treatments."

For weeks Śrīla Prabhupāda had been taking a commercially prepared food supplement, Complax, but now he refused it. "What is the use of artificial food," he said, "when there is natural? You Westerners like the taste of canned, frozen, preserved, rotten food. You eat and then keep the leftovers for seven months, and this you like. And you like drinking cold milk. This Complax is not fresh. I shall try to live on milk and fruit juice. Nothing artificial."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's plan was to stay in Bombay and wait for the grand opening of the temple, now scheduled for Rāma-vijaya Daśamī, in five weeks. But he didn't expect to get much stronger. Although he had spoken in favor of fresh food, he was actually taking nothing more than a little fruit juice and a little mung-jola (water in which mung beans have been soaked)

Śrīla Prabhupāda began chanting constantly on his jopo beads, which he insisted on keeping around his neck at all times. During his massage he would finger the beads and silently chant, and even while resting they remained around his neck.

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked Śrīla Prabhupāda how he felt, he simply replied, "Crisis." After a few days he named a certain Bombay doctor and suggested that he be brought in. But Tamāla Kṛṣṇa gave arguments as to why calling in yet another doctor would not be good at this time. Śrīla Prabhupāda listened and agreed.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa said he felt confident that Śrīla Prabhupāda would live

to see the temple opening in Bombay and later go on to Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed very relieved by these words and rubbed Tamāla Kṛṣṇa's head affectionately, saying, "May your words be blessed. Bless me that I may fix up my mind."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa was pleased to see Prabhupāda take some encouragement, although he felt himself to be in no position to bless his exalted spiritual master. But this kind of exchange had been occurring for weeks now, where Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and others sometimes took the role of Śrīla Prabhupāda's advisors. Such dealings made the disciples feel uncomfortable, yet because Śrīla Prabhupāda was instigating the relationship, they accepted it as very intimate service. He had openly said, "Encourage me," and had allowed himself to become dependent in many ways on the care and intelligence of his disciples. Sometimes he was like a small child turning to his disciples to pick him up and carry him. But his disciples remained aware—and if they didn't, he reminded them—that he was deliberately arranging and allowing this so that they could render him intimate service, for only by serving Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee can one attain love of Kṛṣṇa. This intimate service was completely spiritual, and for doctors who came and went, with their medicines and prescriptions, it was incomprehensible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was teaching his disciples right up until his last days—instructing them in how they should prepare for their own inevitable death. And he was also instructing them in the advanced stage of devotional service, testing them to see whether they were willing to serve, not just as official devotees but out of spontaneous love, love which goes sometimes beyond the rules and regulations. This love was tested, for example, by the disciples' willingness to stay up all hours of the night and constantly attend Śrīla Prabhupāda, assisting him in even his most basic bodily functions. And it was tested as Prabhupāda engaged his disciples in the ordeal of deciding whether he should fight to live or pass away peacefully. It was on the basis of such intimacy, for example, that Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, unsure what was best, argued against Śrīla Prabhupāda's request for a certain doctor. He was completely involved in Śrīla Prabhupāda's well-being, and he was always thinking about it and ready to do whatever was required. Ultimately, Prabhupāda never changed from being the authority and master of all his disciples, and they knew it. They could offer counter-suggestions, as he inspired them to reach across the barriers of ordinary protocol and serve him with love to their heart's content. He even allured

them to reprimand him. But when he liked, he would have the final word, emerging again as the absolute authority for his disciples. It was only to serve his will that his disciples lived and acted. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that his disciples' determination and complete surrender and their desire and prayers for him to remain with them, for him to fight and stay—this was all that was still keeping him in the world.

Certainly Prabhupāda was not being kept in the world by Complan or by the ordinary therapeutic effects of massage. In fact, he was so thin that the massages were no longer actual massages, but were more soothing caresses, which could be given only by faithful, surrendered servants. When one day Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked Prabhupāda if he felt he could stay for five weeks until the temple opening, he replied, "If you encourage me."

Whatever his condition, Śrīla Prabhupāda always maintained his essence: aggressive in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, thoughtful of others, humorous, and completely devoted to Kṛṣṇa. When Abhirāma joined them from England and exclaimed that Śrīla Prabhupāda's Bombay quarters were fit for Indra, the king of heaven, Śrīla Prabhupāda broke into a big, sustained smile. When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, after being absent for a few hours, returned before Prabhupāda and explained, "I was just resting because I was tired from the trip," Śrīla Prabhupāda replied by teasing him, "You already rested on the plane. You just like to sleep, especially in the car."

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked Prabhupāda if he would see any important guests, Prabhupāda replied that he would only see Mr. Bhogilal Patel and Mr. Mahadevia if they came. A few minutes later, as if summoned, Mr. Mahadevia showed up and was brought before Prabhupāda. Although usually very talkative, Mr. Mahadevia seemed too shocked by Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance to speak as freely as usual. At Prabhupāda's request, however, he described the present political climate in India.

Prabhupāda asked to be raised up, and he showed an unusual amount of interest in the report. "They're missing the point," he said. "The whole world is. This is the disease of the body. One party is no better than the other. It is stool, one side or the other. What they can do?"

Although Prabhupāda was not able to go down to the temple for seeing Rādhā-Rasavihārī, he daily asked to see Their picture, which he would look upon lovingly. He could also hear the *ārati-kīrtanas* coming from the temporary temple. Then one day he asked that the framed picture

of Rādhā-Rāsavihārī be fixed to his bedpost so that he could see Them always.

On awakening one morning Prabhupāda immediately began talking: "Every living entity is suffering. From Brahmā down to the ant, there is no happiness." And then he closed his eyes. Later he awoke and said, "*Daiṭ hy eṣā guṇamayī/ mama māyā duratyayā.*"* Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked Prabhupāda if he was thinking of these things while resting. "Yes," Prabhupāda replied. "I was dreaming."

Brahmānanda Swami arrived from England, and Prabhupāda spoke with him of how the senior disciples would have to maintain what he had given them. "You cannot expect me to have a young body like you," he said. "You cannot expect me to live forever. It will have to depend upon Kṛṣṇa." Brahmānanda listened with mixed pleasure and pain. He said that Prabhupāda's quarters were beautiful and that not only these quarters but everything in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was simply made for Śrīla Prabhupāda's pleasure. "I cannot take these with me," Prabhupāda replied. "I am leaving them for you to use."

Jayapātaka Swami arrived from Mayāpur, asking Śrīla Prabhupāda to sign a legal statement concerning the recent attack on the ISKCON center in Mayāpur. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa said that Prabhupāda had already written his will, stating that everything in his name belonged to ISKCON; he didn't want anything further to do with management. Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed this, saying, "Now there is no other way but to make me completely aloof from all management."

Prabhupāda wanted to stay absorbed in hearing the holy name and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He liked to sit up in bed, wearing his reading spectacles and looking at the photo of Rādhā-Rāsavihārī, while a devotee read aloud from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. For hours at a time he would meditate in this way, hearing and seeing Kṛṣṇa. This was the medicine he desired. Those who observed him in this way could understand that he was completely transcendental to thoughts of his body and that he was relishing the reading with great relief. When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested that these

*"This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.14)

readings go on each day, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "This is the most important thing. Read as much as possible."

One evening, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and Brahmānanda recounted to Prabhupāda the history of his purchasing the Bombay land. Prabhupāda lay, listening carefully to each word of the narration of his tolerance and triumph over many obstacles.

At one point, Prabhupāda interjected, "That dog." The devotees paused, not knowing what he meant. Was he referring to the landlord or one of the politicians? But then he made it clear. He said that when he had stayed at the house of Mr. Sethi, he would have to ride each morning in Mr. Sethi's car to the beach, and he would have to sit next to Mr. Sethi's big German shepherd. Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to talk, and as he did, both Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and Brahmānanda realized that he was still conducting a battle. He was fighting for the strength to go on preaching for Rādhā-Rāsavihārī, if They desired. At the end of the recitation, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa offered his obeisances and said, "All glories to Kṛṣṇa's great soldier!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda had been planning to stay for the Bombay temple opening and then to go on *parikrama* around Vṛndāvana, but now he thought of going early to Vṛndāvana. He asked that the G.B.C. men and certain others present in Bombay gather before him and decide. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, Brahmānanda, Surabhi, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, Hari-śauri, Girirāja, Upen-dra, Abhirāma, and Kulādrī all entered and sat surrounding Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa began by making various comments in favor of going to Vṛndāvana. He directed his comments to Prabhupāda and pointed out that even if Prabhupāda were to remain in Bombay in his present condition, he would not be able to attend any of the functions. Also, Prabhupāda was known for his powerful speaking and preaching, and it would not be fitting for the public to see him in his present condition. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa also pointed out that Prabhupāda could come back to visit after the temple opening. Prabhupāda heard these remarks without commenting.

Brahmānanda Swami said that Śrīla Prabhupāda should definitely go to Vṛndāvana. Hari-śauri spoke next, saying that he felt it was difficult to decide but that it depended upon how strongly Prabhupāda desired to stay in Bombay as opposed to doing the best thing for his health. "It is for health," Prabhupāda replied, and Hari-śauri immediately said he was in favor of Prabhupāda's returning to Vṛndāvana.

Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, however, thought that it would be better if Prabhupāda remained in Bombay until after the opening. How could he leave Bombay after so many arrangements had been made and so many important guests had been invited? Surabhi also voted for Prabhupāda's staying in Bombay, because he wanted Prabhupāda to see the temple being opened. He said that if Prabhupāda went to Vṛndāvana, he might not come back.

Then Girirāja spoke. Each day in Bombay was very difficult for Prabhupāda, he said, and each successive day would be even more difficult. And the noise from the construction was constant. Therefore, Girirāja concluded, waiting three weeks would be too risky. As Girirāja spoke, Śrīla Prabhupāda moved his head in affirmation. But for the most part Prabhupāda was noncommittal, asking a question now and then, but mostly listening. For the devotees, the mood was very tense and momentous. Abhirāma spoke next, in favor of going to Vṛndāvana. Upendra said he didn't know.

If Prabhupāda's purpose in asking for opinions had been to get a majority vote, the decision had gone in favor of leaving Bombay. Even as they discussed, the hammering and chiseling noises were constant and almost drowned the sound of Prabhupāda's voice.

Prabhupāda wanted to also discuss the best course of treatment. His friend Dr. Ghosh had written recently, and Prabhupāda asked Tamāla Kṛṣṇa to read the letter. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa then read aloud Dr. Ghosh's advice that Prabhupāda should go to a good hospital for a thorough check-up and treatment. Almost with the attitude of an impartial judge asking for discussion, Prabhupāda said, "So what is wrong with this proposal?"

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa mentioned that the doctors would probably want to give intravenous feeding. Prabhupāda replied, "What is the use of artificial feeding when there is no digestion?" Making a point in favor of the hospital, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa then remarked that although Āyur Vedic medicine was perfect, the practitioners have lost the science in the present day and are mostly quacks, whereas allopathic medicine, although imperfect, has many expert practitioners. Prabhupāda conceded.

"Well, Prabhupāda," said Upendra, "the doctor should come, but only here in your house. You should never go to the hospital." Abhirāma was even stronger about Prabhupāda's not going to the hospital. They already knew that Prabhupāda was not in favor of going to the hospital, and that in fact he had already made up his mind to go to Vṛndāvana. They took it that in his kindness and mercifulness he wanted to consult them and give them the opportunity to decide. At least apparently he was submit-

ting himself to their decisions. But some of them got an eerie, uneasy feeling in thinking his well-being could be the subject of their argumentation.

Finally Prabhupāda concluded, "The hospital is not a guarantee, but we take it as up-to-date scientific knowledge. My Godbrother Tīrtha Mahārāja had to undergo all these treatments, and they were very proud that he died with the best scientific treatment. My Guru Mahārāja, however, did not like it when he was given injection. He objected, saying, 'Why are you giving?' Going to a hospital means giving in to the mercy of the material scientists. Whatever they like, they will do. They cannot guarantee, and we cannot be confident. And going to Vrndāvana—whatever may happen, let Kṛṣṇa do it. Hospital is a chance technique. Going to Vrndāvana, I have no objections. But now there is a dilemma—I am neither dying nor living."

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked whether the Vrndāvana *kavirāja* was any better than the present one in Bombay, Prabhupāda replied, "Better or worse, some husband must be there."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa then offered a new argument. As long as Prabhupāda was in Bombay waiting for the opening, he said, then he would have a reason for living. But if he returned to Vrndāvana, it would mean he was going there to die. So on that basis, Prabhupāda should remain in Bombay, since it would help give him motivation to live. Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled and said, "That is sentiment."

Now that Prabhupāda sounded so convinced, there was no alternative. There was no question of the devotees controlling him; only Kṛṣṇa could. Some of the alternatives had been frightening, and certainly the idea of voting about Prabhupāda had been. Now some of the devotees laughed nervously, relieved to hear Prabhupāda's final decision.

"Vrndāvana," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Let's go"

"Yes, Prabhupāda," said Surabhi.

"But Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "what will happen to all the devotees here? They have been serving you so sincerely. How will they be able to open the temple without you being here? I mean, all the devotees, when they hear you are going to Vrndāvana, they will all want to come. They won't want to stay here. Then they will all want to leave their posts and come with you to Vrndāvana."

"Yes, then let them come," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "I have no objection." Tamāla Kṛṣṇa mentioned that if a thousand devotees might come to be with Prabhupāda, that would slow down the ISKCON work all over

the world. Prabhupāda again said he had no objection. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked whether it was compulsory for the G.B.C. members to come, and Prabhupāda affirmed that it was.

There were no more questions, and the devotees excused themselves to go and make immediate preparations for Prabhupāda's moving to Vṛndāvana. Only Kulādri remained in the room with Prabhupāda.

"So, Kulādri," asked Prabhupāda, "what do you think?" Kulādri had been disturbed by the fact that some of the devotees had seemed to be opposing Prabhupāda's desire and even arguing against him.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," he said, "I don't really understand. How can they give you advice like that? I feel like an intruder. I shouldn't even be here. But it seems to me that you are waiting for Kṛṣṇa to make some decision on whether you stay or go."

"What?" Prabhupāda asked.

"It seems you are waiting for Kṛṣṇa's decision," said Kulādri. "If you are going to wait for Kṛṣṇa's decision, that might as well be in Vṛndāvana." Prabhupāda smiled and closed his eyes. "Yes," he said, "that is very good advice."

CHAPTER TEN

Kṛṣṇa's Great Soldier

Prabhupāda traveled by train from Bombay to Mathurā. Brahmānanda carried him in his arms from the train to a waiting car, and within fifteen to twenty-five minutes Prabhupāda was back in Vṛndāvana.

The devotees at the Krishna-Balarām Mandir were upset to see that Prabhupāda's condition had deteriorated so much in the one month he had been away. His room was as he had left it, except for the addition of a large double bed. He lay down, and they closed the curtains and dimmed the lights. For about five minutes he lay still, with his eyes closed.

"Now you are home, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

Still Śrīla Prabhupāda lay quietly, not moving. Then slowly he brought his hands to his chest, clasped them together, and said, "Thank you." He seemed relieved.

"Now you are in the care of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled and nodded slightly. "Yes," he said. "*Kṛṣṇa tad ity pada paṅkaja pañjarāntam*," indicating King Kulasekhara's prayer to Lord Kṛṣṇa: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, please help me die immediately so that the swan of my mind may be encircled by the stem of Your lotus feet. Otherwise, at the time of my final breath, how will it be possible for me to think of You?"

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda was in a precarious state, he remained completely fixed in thought of Kṛṣṇa in one way or another—Kṛṣṇa's name, His form, His pastimes, or His devotional service. Prabhupāda suggested going to see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma at nine-thirty, just as he had done before, but his servants advised that he rest today and begin that program tomorrow. "Whatever you desire, I will do," Prabhupāda said.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked Prabhupāda if he wanted the *karīṇḍja* to come.

‘As you said, Prabhupāda, for better or worse, some husband must be here.’

Śrīla Prabhupāda nodded. “Now manage everything,” he said, “and let me think of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma.”

A little before four in the afternoon, while devotees were reading aloud from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Prabhupāda asked if the temple bell had rung the hour. Ever since the temple opening in 1975, he had insisted that the bell at the front gate be rung every hour to signify the hour and once every half hour. At first, the temple president had been unable to get a watchman who would remain awake through the night and ring the bell regularly. But Śrīla Prabhupāda had insisted so strongly that the temple management had finally established the bell-ringing. For Śrīla Prabhupāda, it was more than just a good standard; it was a symbol of the entire temple management’s effectiveness. If they couldn’t even arrange that the bell be rung regularly, then how could they manage everything else? Now Śrīla Prabhupāda was saying he thought he heard the bell ring at the wrong time. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa explained it might have been a different bell, and the devotees continued reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But Śrīla Prabhupāda again asked about the bell in the temple dome. As Hari-śauri rose to go out and check, the bell began loudly ringing—one... two... three... four—properly sounding the hour.

“That is my concern,” said Prabhupāda, “that such a huge establishment is properly managed. If not properly managed, then everything will be finished.”

“I don’t think that that’s going to happen,” said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. “We are too much indebted to you to allow what you have established to become spoiled.”

“Please see to that,” said Prabhupāda.

Nevertheless, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for Akṣayananda Swami, and as soon as he came into the room, inquired from him, “Will the bell ring or not?” Akṣayananda promised to diligently see to it, taking the instruction very seriously, as perhaps his last order from his spiritual master.

The *pājārī* entered and gave Prabhupāda a large, fragrant *tulasī* garland from Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, and Prabhupāda returned to listening to the reading.

Later in the day, he confided to Tamāla Kṛṣṇa about the past few weeks. “I must thank you,” he said, “that you took me to London and again brought me here without any difficulty. That is a great credit for you. For that I am thanking you. In this condition, a bundle of bones—still you did it. Kṛṣṇa will bless you.”

Hari-śauri had obtained another detailed astrological chart on Śrīla Prabhupāda from Delhi. This astrologer recommended a *montro* to Lord Śiva to be chanted by ten *brāhmaṇas* for twenty-one days.

"We have the *mahā-mantra*," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "There is no need of others." He spoke disapprovingly of the suggestion.

"Are these astrological charts very much applicable for devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda?" asked Hari-śauri.

"No," said Prabhupāda. "Don't waste money for this astrology."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's faith was only in *kīrtana*. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa suggested they again have continuous *kīrtana*, and Prabhupāda said, "That is real business. These astrologers are *karmīs*. We have nothing to do with the *karmīs*."

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In response to Śrīla Prabhupāda's call, the twenty-three G.B.C. members again began gathering in Vṛndāvana. They arrived heavy-hearted, yet on coming before Śrīla Prabhupāda they were pleased to give him progress reports on their preaching on his behalf. Śrīla Prabhupāda was happy to hear the reports and was as encouraging as ever to his leaders, despite his condition.

Haṁsadūta Swami was one of the first to arrive, from Sri Lanka. Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed him to develop farm projects there, as Kīrtanānanda Swami had done in New Vrindaban. "Sometimes when preaching," said Haṁsadūta, "I tell them, 'What kind of country is this? The land is of the *rājārṣis*, and some lady is running the government!'"

"Do not touch politics," Prabhupāda warned. "We are cultural and philosophy."

Prabhupāda began dealing with Girirāja over bank matters. The local Vṛndāvana bank was reluctant to allow a withdrawal from an ISKCON fund, and Śrīla Prabhupāda had to be called in for advice. He gave keen, practical strategy for solving the problem, but he asked to be spared these things in the future. Devotees in the room were amazed to see Prabhupāda still dealing expertly with such affairs. When Girirāja apologized to Prabhupāda for involving him, Prabhupāda replied, "Therefore I said, do the needful."

Actually, Prabhupāda's calling the G.B.C. men together had been so they could chant for him. Now, more than ever, he wanted the medicine of the holy name, not of the doctors. When he heard that his friend Dr.

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Actually, Prabhupāda's calling the G.B.C. men together had been so they could chant for him. Now, more than ever, he wanted the *medicine* of the holy name, not of the doctors. When he heard that his friend Dr.

Ghosh was coming to Vṛndāvana to open a clinic and that he could prescribe treatment, he refused the offer. "These doctors will come and give something to try and save," he said. "I don't want to be saved. Dr. Ghosh may come for the clinic he wants to develop, but not for my treatment." Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked if they could at least call in some local Vṛndāvana doctors.

"No," said Prabhupāda. "Let us take your advice for *kīrtana* only." Tamāla Kṛṣṇa agreed that *kīrtana* was best, because in that way they were pleading for Kṛṣṇa's help.

"Better you don't pray to Kṛṣṇa to save me," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Let me die now." Prabhupāda then asked to sit up. "If Hamsadūta is not tired," he said, "he can continue singing."

When Harikeśa had received the call to come immediately to Vṛndāvana, he had been told to "expect the worst." Immediately he contacted his printer, who was in the process of completing several books, and told him that he must have advance copies by the next day. So by the time he got on the plane for India, he had newly printed volumes of the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in German, the *Kṛṣṇa* trilogy in German, and a Yugoslavian *Śrī Isopaniṣad*. But when he arrived at Śrīla Prabhupāda's door in Vṛndāvana, a devotee told him he could not bring the books to Śrīla Prabhupāda now. "Why not?" Harikeśa asked.

"This is not the kind of mood we are trying to create here," the devotee explained.

"What? Are you crazy?" exclaimed Harikeśa. "Books are Prabhupāda's life and soul!" He went in and showed Prabhupāda the seven new books. Immediately Prabhupāda took the first volume of the *Kṛṣṇa* trilogy and held it up, looking at the cover painting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda began crying and reached out, trying to stroke Harikeśa's head. Harikeśa reached out and held Śrīla Prabhupāda's hand, thinking himself unworthy of being patted.

"He was rotting here, typewriting," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, referring to when Harikeśa had been his secretary, just before going to preach in Europe. "I said, 'You go.' I had ten servants. You thought that I was degrading you by sending you away. No. Now you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," said Harikeśa, sobbing.

"Here is an intelligent boy, I thought," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Why

should he rot here, typewriting?" Prabhupāda looked at each book. "Printing and everything is first class," he said. He asked how many had been printed, and Harikēṣa replied, "One hundred twenty thousand Kṛṣṇa trilogies, sixty thousand *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* Second Cantos, and ten thousand *Īsopaniṣads*."

"Can you distribute that *Īsopaniṣad*?" Prabhupāda asked. Harikēṣa assured him that they could definitely distribute the book in Yugoslavia.

"Then print more," said Prabhupāda. They continued discussing book production. Books were indeed Śrīla Prabhupāda's life and soul. From Harikēṣa's entering with the new books, Prabhupāda had felt a profound ecstasy that had spread to Harikēṣa and all the devotees present. Everyone was keenly aware that what they were experiencing was transcendental, a special reciprocation with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and as long as they were sincere it would not die.

"Now you just have to become better," said Harikēṣa. "More healthy."

"Healthy?" said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "I have nothing to do with this body."

During one of the long *kīrtana* vigils, Brahmanānda Swamī was present, and Śrīla Prabhupāda called him forward. He wanted to give him last instructions about Africa. Prabhupāda was lying down, and Brahmanānda had to put his ear near Śrīla Prabhupāda's mouth to hear. The other devotees in the room also hushed and came as close as possible.

"With Nava yogendra," Prabhupāda said in a hoarse whisper, "the both of you. South Africa also. There gradually the people are taking. Try to bring Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa back. He is very competent. So jointly organize Africa. Have *sankīrtana*. All Europeans, Americans, Africans. Tulasī dāsa is very competent also. United Nations under Caitanya Mahāprabhu's flag. It is possible. Otherwise, that United Nations will be simply false attempt."

"You said that when you first came to New York," replied Brahmanānda, urgently recalling his first days with Śrīla Prabhupāda, "you went to the United Nations. The very first day I came to the *kīrtana* there in New York. The next day you went for that peace vigil outside the United Nations, and you were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and saying that this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only method for making United Nations."

"That is a fact," said Prabhupāda. "Try for the protection of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and things will be successful. Others, they will simply waste

time and be disappointed and change the body and suffer." Prabhupāda changed the subject, but Brahmananda was satisfied. He had been given enough service for many lifetimes.

Kulādri came into the room on behalf of Kīrtanānanda Swami, with gifts for Śrīla Prabhupāda: an \$8,000 check, a sapphire ring, a gold medallion studded with sapphires and rubies.

"So, why don't you find out some bride?" Śrīla Prabhupāda remarked, and the devotees' sudden laughter broke the room's solemn mood. Accepting the ring on his finger, Śrīla Prabhupāda said someone should take care of the other valuables.

Kulādri said he had also one request to make on behalf of Kīrtanānanda Swami: "Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja said that you have asked us to pray to Kṛṣṇa before. But he says he doesn't feel qualified to pray to Kṛṣṇa. So he is asking that you please pray to Kṛṣṇa for us, because we cannot pray to Kṛṣṇa directly. We don't know Kṛṣṇa. But if *you* ask, Kṛṣṇa must be sure to fulfill your desire. So would you please pray to Kṛṣṇa to stay with us? We want you to come to the palace that we're building in New Vrindaban, Śrīla Prabhupāda, if it is possible."

"I wish," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "But unless I become a little strong, how can I go?"

"We've also brought some sweets and ice cream," said Kulādri. He knew that Prabhupāda could not take it, but he asked if he could just at least take a little taste. Prabhupāda agreed, and a small piece of the ice cream was put on his tongue. "First class," he said.

Later Kīrtanānanda arrived, and Prabhupāda asked for a report on New Vrindaban.

"Everything is going very nicely, Prabhupāda," said Kīrtanānanda. "Your palace is almost finished. Already many people are coming every day to see it. It will be finished in a couple of months. The other day a lady went in, and she turned to one of her boys and said, 'I cannot tell you what I am feeling. It is so wonderful.'"

"Yes," said Prabhupāda. "It is wonderful in that quarter." He paused, reflecting. "Hmm... Let us see which palace I am going to."

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked Kīrtanānanda to take back his valuable gifts and use them for New Vrindaban. "You require money," said Prabhupāda, "so you take back and utilize it there. That is my request."

"Thank you very much," said Kīrtanānanda. "Most of all we want you, though"

"Yes, I also," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "And if I survive, I have a strong desire to go where you are and live there. It will be a great pleasure."

Kīrtanānanda had pictures of the palace, and Prabhupāda sat up to see them. "You are fulfilling my dream," he said. "New Vrindaban. I dreamt all these things. Wonderful things he has done. He is the first student—from the very beginning. When I was in the storefront, he was bringing carpets, bench, some gong, some lamps."

In Vṇḍāvana, Girirāja had seen Prabhupāda a number of times, mostly on business. He also regularly took his turn in the *kīrtana* vigils in Prabhupāda's room. But one day, wanting to take full advantage of Vṇḍāvana, he went to visit some of the temples. At the end of the day he took rest for the night on the roof of the *gurukula* building. But in the middle of the night he was awakened by a devotee saying that Prabhupāda wanted to see him. He ran down immediately, aware that Prabhupāda might pass away at any moment. Anything Prabhupāda might say could be his last words. He came into Prabhupāda's room, offered obeisances, and got up very close beside the bed.

"Do you think this movement can go on without me?" Prabhupāda asked. Girirāja was astounded that Prabhupāda had called him in the middle of the night to ask him this.

"I think," said Girirāja, "that as long as we are sincere and go on chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and follow the principles, the movement will be successful."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was silent. When he spoke, each word seemed to come with great effort. He uttered the word *organization*. Then he said, "Organization and intelligence. Is there anything else?"

Girirāja felt within his heart that he wanted to cry out, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, stay with us." But instead he said, "No."

"All right," Prabhupāda said. And Girirāja offered obeisances and left. Outside Prabhupāda's room, Girirāja continued to reflect on Prabhupāda's words—"organization and intelligence." Prabhupāda seemed to be demanding much more love and commitment; not that ISKCON could survive on organization and intelligence alone. Girirāja was thinking that perhaps these might be the last words Prabhupāda would ever speak to him.

Paramānanda, the temple president of Prabhupāda's Pennsylvania farm project, Gītā-nagarī, also came to be with Prabhupāda. "So organize this farm project," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Simple living. Human life is meant

for God realization Try to help them"

"We're always feeling your presence very strongly, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Paramānanda "Simply by your teachings and instructions We are always meditating on your instructions"

"Thank you," said Śrīla Prabhupāda "That is the real presence. Physical presence is not important" Paramānanda had brought a letter from his wife, Satyabhāmā Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked if he should read it, and Prabhupāda agreed Tamāla Kṛṣṇa read,

Dear Śrīla Prabhupada

Please accept my most humble obeisances All glories to Your Divine Grace

This shawl is made of the wool from our own sheep. It is spun and woven here at Gita nagari It is the first piece we have made. While I was working on it I would always think of you of how I was supposedly making you a gift But actually you are giving me the gift of engagement in devotional service. Śrīla Prabhupada, I always pray to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva to protect you and allow you to stay with us to finish your books But I think today the rain falling from the sky is actually the tears of the demigods crying at the prospect of your departure. I am also crying. Even Kṛṣṇa cried at the passing of Grand father Bhīṣma. So I have a right to cry I cannot be so philosophical to say that you are always present in your books and teachings, though I know these things are true. I will miss you so much, Śrīla Prabhupada, if you go I beg that I may always remain your memorial servant and devotee.

Your humble disciple,
Satyabhama dasi

"Thank her," said Śrīla Prabhupāda and he reached for the shawl "Made with our wool"

"So you'll take rest now, Śrīla Prabhupāda?" suggested Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

"Umhm," said Prabhupāda "This can be on the foot." And he gestured that the saffron-colored shawl be put as a blanket on his bed Tears came from his eyes as he lay back.

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Śrīla Prabhupāda was becoming more and more in favor of departing from the world When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa remarked that Prabhupāda was not drinking much, he replied that he had no inclination.

"I don't know what to say, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa "It's certainly bewildering I can only expect somehow Kṛṣṇa will have to do something" Tamāla Kṛṣṇa requested again that they bring a doctor "Still some husband must be there, you said," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa reminded "We should have a doctor's help I still believe that After all, we are not doctors" "No," said Prabhupāda, "but we are already taking help of doctor, Āyur Veda—that is *Yōgendra Ras* "

"You're just beginning that now, of course," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa "Tomorrow you might give it up Then what will be our position?"

"Widow," said Prabhupāda with a laugh Then he added, "Actually, Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate husband"

The devotees with Prabhupāda found it very difficult to adopt his mood of looking forward to his passing away Once during a *kīrtana*, Upendra asked if Prabhupāda wanted something to drink When Prabhupāda refused, some of the devotees began to cry, thinking that if Prabhupāda didn't eat or even drink, he would not remain with them much longer The devotees were trying to be submissively resigned to Prabhupāda's will, and they accepted that his direction was more and more toward leaving They were coming to accept it, surrounding him with *kīrtana* and not causing him any inconvenience with their problems or demands Whatever he wanted, they should want But the idea of his passing away was still almost unbearable

In their resignation, the devotees became philosophical Rūpānuga said Prabhupāda could be likened to an ambassador in a foreign country He may have many affairs in the foreign country, but finally he's called back Jayādvaita said that Prabhupāda had taught his disciples everything and that now he was teaching them how to die Another devotee said that Prabhupāda had better friends in the spiritual world In their talks, the devotees stressed the importance of their cooperating with one another, and they discussed how ISKCON would continue in the future But it was all depressing

Nevertheless, they kept returning to the unpleasant but unavoidable realization that Prabhupāda would very soon leave them With Prabhupāda so clearly indicating that he had decided to definitely leave, the devotees were becoming despondent At best, a solemn mood prevailed

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda said they should consult Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, a disciple of Prabhupāda's *sannyāsa guru*, for details on how to conduct the ceremony for a departed Vaiṣṇava He also described where his *samadhī* should be located and asked that after his departure, a feast be served

in all the main temples in Vṇḍāvana, with ISKCON bearing the expense.

On one level, everything seemed to go on as usual. The October weather was very pleasant. The *gurukula* boys were continuing with their routine, and the Deity worship went on as usual. But in front of the temple, workmen began clearing a space for Prabhupāda's *samādhi*.

After several days of Prabhupāda's not eating or drinking, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa tried again, but gently. "You don't want to drink anything today?"

"Let me drink *hari-nāma amṛta vilāsa*," said Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"*Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda*," said Hari-śauri. "*Hari-nāma* is the sweetest nectar."

"*Nivṛta tarṣair upagīyamānam bhavauṣadhāt*,†" Prabhupāda quoted. "This is *bhavauṣadha, hari-kīrtana*."

Jayādvaita completed the verse: "*Bhavauṣadhāc chotra-mano-bhīrāmāt*."

"Ab," Prabhupāda acknowledged. "And *caranāmṛta*—diet. Diet and medicine. Let me depend on these."

Although he was fasting, Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired about the *prasādam* being served to the devotees. Now a hundred or more extra devotees were at the temple, and more were expected.

"This time, what do they supply?" asked Prabhupāda.

"What they supply?" said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "You mean *prasāda*? Of course, today is the day after *Ekādaśī*, so they had some cereal made with *gur* and some fruit salad made with guavas and bananas. That was all this morning. Lunch is usually substantial, very good. This is the best *prasādam* that we have had in many years in India. The cook, *Ayodhyapati*, is doing very nicely. Do you want to know what he cooks for lunch?"

Prabhupāda nodded slightly.

"He cooks an *ālu-sabji* with *dāl* sauce," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa continued, "and he makes *bindi*, very nicely spiced, and *dāl, ratti, rice, apple chutney, and dahi-rattā* every day."

* Here Śrīla Prabhupāda is quoting a song by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. "Chanting the holy name is my only pastime."

† Here Śrīla Prabhupāda is referring to a verse in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10 t 4), wherein hearing about Kṛṣṇa is described as the medicine to cure the material disease of taking birth in the material world again and again and suffering.

Prabhupāda asked who assisted Ayodhyāpati. He didn't want any hired cooks.

"Only devotees are cooking," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "And it is very tasteful. And everybody—about 125 devotees—sit together and take *prasādam*. And the guests from the guesthouse also take. Everyone takes together."

"Everybody liked?" asked Prabhupāda, smiling.

"Yes, oh, yes," was the combined reply of the devotees in the room. They all crowded close around Prabhupāda's bed.

"That's nice," said Prabhupāda.

"You are the perfect father, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said one of the devotees. "You provide everything for us. A place to live, food to eat, everything. And you've trained us in spiritual knowledge."

Prabhupāda uttered one of his deep sounds—"Hmmm." Then he said, "Chant. All together," and the assembled devotees gladly began a *kīrtana*.

The room was very dark except for a nightlight behind the head of Śrīla Prabhupāda's bed. Devotees were chanting softly, using only the one tiny pair of *karatālas* for keeping rhythm. Tripurāri Swami was massaging Śrīla Prabhupāda's feet, Bhagatī his right leg, and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa his left arm. Suddenly, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, from the Devananda Sarasvatī Math in Mathurā, entered along with two of his men. Prabhupāda's disciples immediately gave him a seat at the side of the bed. Śrīla Prabhupāda began speaking, but so softly that Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja had to lean over to hear. Seeing a conversation about to begin, the devotees in the room, numbering about fifteen or twenty, moved in closer.

Śrīla Prabhupāda began, "Śrīla Prabhupāda [Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī] said that we should preach in Europe, America. That was his desire. And his other desire was that we all would work together jointly to preach."

"Yes, that is right," said Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

"I didn't waste a single moment," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "I tried my best, and it has been successful to some extent." Śrīla Prabhupāda's voice was choked with emotion. "If we work conjointly," he continued, "then as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, *prthivīte**... *saṅkīrtana* has great possibilities. My life is coming to an end. It is my desire that you all forgive

* Here Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would spread to every town and village in the world.

me for my mistakes. My Godbrothers, when you are preaching at times there are some disputes, some misunderstandings. Maybe I also committed some offenses like that. Please ask them to forgive me. When I am gone, you will all sit together and decide how you can manage for some *utsava*, or festival, for me. How much should we pay? What do you think of this?"

"Whatever instructions you give me," said Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, "I will follow them with absolute sincerity. I consider you my *guru*."

Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja said that what Śrīla Prabhupāda had created should be protected, and it was everyone's duty to do so. He pledged to help in whatever way he could. Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired if his Godbrothers who had temples in Matburā-Vṛndāvana were present, and Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja replied that most of them were out of station.

Regarding Śrīla Prabhupāda's asking his Godbrothers for forgiveness, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja said, "They are all trivial things. In this worldwide preaching, if some little things go wrong here and there, what difference does it make? It is all right. Whatever you have done, you have done for the well-being of the entire human society. There is no individual interest. Everything was done in the interest of God." He advised that Śrīla Prabhupāda not worry. His disciples were worthy and would maintain things; therefore Prabhupāda should now simply "think of the Lord."

Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja then asked his assistant, Śeṣaśāyī Brahmacārī, to sing *Śrī-rūpa-mañjart-pada*. While everyone listened in silence and Śrīla Prabhupāda lay still, Śeṣaśāyī Brahmacārī sang the song very sweetly. Next, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja sang a *bhajana*, finishing with the refrain *Jaya Gurudeva! Jaya Prabhupāda!*

After a pause, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja spoke again, this time referring to Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples. "They should be told that they should never get motivated by their own self-interest," he said. "They should make your mission successful."

Śrīla Prabhupāda turned his head slowly, looking over the devotees as they gathered in even more closely. Then slowly he lifted his hand, as if to call them all to attention, and said, "Do not fight among yourselves. I have given direction in my books." He then lowered his hand.

Prabhupāda's Godbrother Indupati entered the room. Śrīla Prabhupāda heard his greeting and repeated his request: "First of all I want to say forgive me for all my offenses. I didn't want to hurt anyone, but while preaching one has to sometimes say something that may offend others. Will you forgive me?"

"Yes, yes," Indupati said.

"Mahārāja, you didn't commit any offense," said Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. "We never thought that you did anything wrong. On the other hand, you bless us. We need it. You never did any wrong. If someone is offended by your actions, that is his fault."

Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja then gently took Śrīla Prabhupāda's right hand and felt his pulse. After a moment or two he said, "Pulse is all right. And your consciousness is perfect. If you have to go, by the will of the Lord, then you will go perfectly." Promising to return again, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja asked permission to leave, and he and Indupati and their party left the room.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples moved back and remained silent, not wanting to instigate any conversation to unnecessarily tax Prabhupāda. They appreciated Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's words, but it was another final good-bye. Before the atmosphere of despair could engulf them, they began again their soft, singing *kr̥tana*.

Early one morning in October, as Śrīla Prabhupāda continued fasting from food and drink, Upendra made an innocent but somewhat impertinent complaint. "How can you refuse to drink?" he asked.

"What is wrong if I don't drink?" Śrīla Prabhupāda replied. "I feel no inconvenience." Upendra added that if Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't drink, his body would become dehydrated. Prabhupāda made no reply, and Upendra left the room.

"What about water?" Abhirāma asked.

Śrīla Prabhupāda thought for a moment and said, "So you discuss among yourselves and decide what you want me to do."

Discuss? He seemed to be speaking of more than the merits of drinking water. "Discuss about recovery?" asked Abhirāma.

"I don't want," said Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"You say you don't want recovery, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

"Yes," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. Abhirāma then went to the outer room, the secretary's reception room, where some of the G.B.C. men were sitting together. He dutifully mentioned what Śrīla Prabhupāda had just said—to discuss among themselves about his recovery. But Abhirāma's remark didn't seem like news. The devotees were already well aware that Prabhupāda was making almost no attempt to carry on. They were resigned to it. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to leave now, to "die peacefully." They had been trying to encourage him to drink, but now he was determined

to simply fast until the right time came. Whether they could accept it or not, it was happening. Therefore Abhirāma's comment provoked no formal discussion.

That afternoon Prabhupāda called for Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, who was at that time taking his lunch. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa responded at once and entered the room along with several other G.B.C. men. They all came very close to hear what Prabhupāda wanted to say.

"If I want to survive," he said, "of course I'll have to take something." His words came slowly, but with difficulty. "It is not possible to survive without taking any food. But my survival means so many inconveniences, one after another. Therefore I have decided to die peacefully." His voice trailed off, and everyone was too stunned to speak. They sat looking almost blankly at him as he lay with his eyes closed. He occasionally made a noise like "ummm," and only after several very long minutes did Tamāla Kṛṣṇa manage to ask Prabhupāda if they should continue with the *kṛtana*. By this time, more devotees, having finished lunch, were entering the room, and they began softly singing *kṛtana*. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa leaned forward and assured Prabhupāda about the stipend payments for his former family. Prabhupāda acknowledged.

"Don't worry," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa. "I'll see that each of them is satisfied. They won't feel sorry in any way. You've provided for everyone, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

After a few minutes, Prabhupāda turned his attention to Hari-śauri, who was sobbing silently near Prabhupāda's head. With some sternness in his voice, Prabhupāda asked, "Why do you want me to survive?" Hari-śauri could not speak. He felt that if he asked Prabhupāda to stay it would be an offense, since he had already decided to leave. Hari-śauri could not keep his emotions in check, and yet he did not want to say, "Stay and struggle." Neither did he nor any of the others want Prabhupāda to leave. Somehow, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa had not caught Prabhupāda's last remark to Hari-śauri, and so he leaned forward towards Prabhupāda, half questioning, "They want you to survive?"

"If I want to die," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "this is a very peaceful death. You go on chanting."

As the *kṛtana* continued, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa asked to be excused. Prabhupāda asked why, and he replied he was going for discussion.

"For discussion," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "They want me to survive, and I want to die peacefully. I cannot make miracles. The physical body has to be maintained if I am to survive. But without taking food, how

the physical body will go on? That is fanaticism."

"Everything is in the hands of Kṛṣṇa," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eyes had been closed, but suddenly he opened them and said, "Kṛṣṇa wants me to do as I like. The choice is mine. Kṛṣṇa has given me full freedom."

These words struck some of the devotees as extremely startling and different. But Brahmānanda spoke up in the mood of resigned assurance. "It doesn't matter whether you live or die, Prabhupāda," he said. "You'll always be with Kṛṣṇa, and we will always be with you, because we will follow your instructions."

"Whether I live or die," Prabhupāda said, "I will always be Kṛṣṇa's servant. So if Brahmānanda has assured me that this movement will go on, then better let me die peacefully." The devotees, who were only inches away from Prabhupāda, heard these faint words with dismay. After a few minutes of heavy silence, they resumed the *kīrtana*. Prabhupāda seemed to rest.

Within a few minutes all the available G.B.C. men and senior *saṅghyāts* were gathered in the outer room. Brahmānanda was feeling very low that he had told Prabhupāda that everything would go on without him and that Prabhupāda had replied that he would therefore die. The devotees remained amazed at Prabhupāda's statement that Kṛṣṇa had given him freedom to do as he liked. These words now struck like a thunderbolt. With these words, "Kṛṣṇa has given me the choice," Prabhupāda turned all the devotees' minds in a different direction. Abhirāma reminded them that Prabhupāda wanted them to discuss about his recovery, and now they were having that discussion. But they were confused and bewildered by the sudden change in Prabhupāda's mood.

Kīrtanānanda Swami, the seniormost disciple, spoke up with clarity and logic. "If Kṛṣṇa has given Śrīla Prabhupāda the independence to choose, that means He also has given us the independence. So we should assert our independence and ask Śrīla Prabhupāda to stay."

One by one, devotees spoke up in support of the decision to ask Śrīla Prabhupāda to stay. Yes, it was a fact that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement would go on without Śrīla Prabhupāda's physical presence; but it wouldn't be the same.

"Yes, and Prabhupāda hasn't finished translating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*," said Brahmānanda.

"Yes," said another, "we should ask Śrīla Prabhupāda to stay for at least five or ten years."

"Five or ten years? We should ask him to stay for one hundred years!"

"But not all of the G.B.C. members are here to decide."

"Well, who in the G.B.C. is going to say that we shouldn't ask Prabhupāda to stay?"

They were in agreement. They *did* want Prabhupāda to stay, and they should express their desire to him. The mood of the last few days had suddenly reversed. They were no longer in the depths of despair but were thinking positively and enthusiastically that Śrīla Prabhupāda would stay with them.

"Why should we think that there is no hope for him to become fit again?" said Kīrtanānanda. "Jesus could bring people back to life from the dead, and even mundane yogis can do it. So Śrīla Prabhupāda certainly can if he wants."

Now Brahmananda spoke up with great strength. "We weren't realizing that actually we *need* Prabhupāda! That should be the understanding. There is no question of allowing Prabhupāda out of our presence for a moment!"

It was about 3:30 PM. when the twenty devotees entered Śrīla Prabhupāda's room and crowded around his bed. Śrīla Prabhupāda lay with his eyes closed, motionless, but alert to their presence. Kīrtanānanda Swami had been chosen to be the spokesman, and as he leaned over to speak to Śrīla Prabhupāda, his lips began to tremble, his eyes filled with tears, and he broke down, sobbing, with his head at the side of the bed. Śrīla Prabhupāda reached out but could not find Kīrtanānanda.

"Who?" said Prabhupāda.

Many voices spoke, "Kīrtanānanda."

Śrīla Prabhupāda then laid his hand on Kīrtanānanda's head and gently rubbed it.

"Hmmm? So what do you want?" he asked. No one could say anything, as they were all waiting for Kīrtanānanda. Brahmananda was rubbing Kīrtanānanda on the back to soothe him, and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa was encouraging him to try to say something. Finally, after another minute of emotional waiting, Kīrtanānanda raised his head. He looked at Śrīla Prabhupāda and pleaded, "If Kṛṣṇa gives you the choice, then don't go! We need you!"

"So this is your joint opinion?" asked Śrīla Prabhupāda. "You have discussed?" He held his hand in the air and moved it around, so as to indicate all the devotees.

Brahmananda Swami spoke up very emotionally but positively: "We

have all met together, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We want you to remain and lead this movement and finish the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We said that you must remain for at least another ten years. You have only done fifty percent of your work."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was listening very carefully without any movement, but when Brahmānanda said "fifty percent," he frowned and said, "No." Finally he uttered a "Hmmm." He was considering the proposal. His eyes were still closed, and he seemed to be consulting Kṛṣṇa from within himself. Several times he uttered "Hmmm," and everyone was held in suspense, not able to speak or think or do anything except look intently at Śrīla Prabhupāda. Then with his eyes still closed, he yawned, and his gold teeth began to show. "All right," he said.

It was probably the most casual-sounding decision on life or death ever made. At that moment the devotees understood Śrīla Prabhupāda's independent position; he could stay or go as he chose. They had become so faithless, however, that they were thinking that his passing away was inevitable and could not possibly be delayed, even by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself. Now he displayed his wonderful transcendental nature with a simple yawn—"All right"—as if choosing between life and death was the most unimportant thing in the world. Harikeśa gave a short laugh, the kind that he saved for when Śrīla Prabhupāda did something completely transcendental, incomprehensible, and inimitable. "Jaya, Prabhupāda!" he said.

Prabhupāda had again proven himself to be beyond understanding. The devotees laughed nervously, unsure what was appropriate. Not knowing whether to laugh or cry, they fell silent again to see what Prabhupāda would do.

"So give me something to drink," he said, and all the devotees shouted, "Jaya, Prabhupāda!" He would stay with them. It was confirmed. Everyone was greatly relieved. "All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!"

"This is real affection," Prabhupāda replied.

The atmosphere had changed. Śrīla Prabhupāda had changed. His servants lifted him up, and all the devotees watched as he drank a full glass of grape juice. Now, instead of withdrawing his energy, as he had done steadily for the last few days, he came back to life again. Then he lay back. "Thank you very much," he said. "Hare Kṛṣṇa."

And the devotees replied, "Hare Kṛṣṇa."

So this was what Prabhupāda wanted. He was drawing out their emotions and increasing their affection for him more and more by putting

them into a state of transcendental distress. Now they could understand, at least to a tiny degree, what the *gopīs'* pangs of separation were like. Śrīla Prabhupāda was bringing his disciples to the extremes of devotional sentiments and showing that actually *their* lives were in *his* hands.

After a long pause he asked, "Strawberries, they have been brought?"

"Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "very nice strawberries."

"I will take some strawberries," he said.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa said, "you gave your word to Kṛṣṇa in Bombay that you would see Him sitting in His new big temple, and you have yet to keep your word to Him." Prabhupāda smiled very brightly.

"You have fixed the date for the opening of Bombay," said Brabmānanda. "January the first. So we would like to invite you to come, Śrīla Prabhupāda. It is your temple. You have asked Kṛṣṇa to come there. When we all gave up, you carried on the fight."

"Yes, that was a great fight," said Prabhupāda, smiling. "After so much fighting and then to construct a big temple is a great triumph."

"I don't think Kṛṣṇa will come into the temple," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "unless you are personally there, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to open the door."

Prabhupāda was still smiling. "All right," he said. "But chanting should not be stopped. Things should go on naturally."

Turning to Kīrtanānanda, Prabhupāda asked, "Kīrtanānanda's palace—when it will be ready?"

"In early spring," Kīrtanānanda replied, "as soon as the weather is a little warmer. It gives you the chance to have a little time to recuperate, then go to Bombay and open the temple there, and then you can come open your palace. We have about seventy-five letters from all the devotees in New Vrindaban, and they are all begging you to come. They say their life is finished if you don't come."

"So let me take a little rest," said Prabhupāda, "and then I shall take strawberries."

Later that day, Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking more audibly and quoting verses, including the *Īsopaniṣad* verse that says one who acknowledges the Supreme Personality of Godhead can go on living for hundreds of years. He sat up and drank some vegetable broth. He also talked for half an hour with Gīrājā about hank matters, repeatedly questioning him to make sure he understood. He also spoke at length with Rāmeśvara Swami about preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Iran.

of the devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself was responding to the devotees' prayers, and Kṛṣṇa had given him the choice. But as a surrendered soul, Śrīla Prabhupāda waited for further developments, ever sensitive to Kṛṣṇa's desire. As Prabhupāda had said when invited by Kīrtānānanda to come to his palace in New Vrindaban, "Let us see which palace I am going to."

As a loving tension can sometimes exist between the Supreme Lord and His pure devotee, so now a similar tension existed between Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers. Prior to his disciples' desperate petition at his bedside, Śrīla Prabhupāda had seen his duty as instructing his disciples in how to die. Part of his mission was to set the perfect example in this most important lesson—how to pass life's ultimate test. But now his disciples were asking him to postpone the lesson in dying and stay with them indefinitely in the preaching field. And Prabhupāda had agreed, showing that he had the ability to live if he chose. But sooner or later he would have to return to the lesson on how a person should face the end of life.

One special feature of Śrīla Prabhupāda's activities is his relating intimately to the human condition while at the same time remaining aloof and transcendental. As a pure devotee, he was not subjected to the law of *karma*, which awards reactions for pious and sinful deeds. He was not born by the force of *karma*, nor would he die by force of *karma*. As stated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, "One whose body, mind, and words are fully engaged in devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is a liberated soul, even while living in this world." People often misunderstand the movements of a pure devotee within the material world, just as one, on seeing clouds blowing past the moon, may think the moon itself is moving. The *śāstra*, therefore, warns us never to see the *guru* as an ordinary man subject to *karma*.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda, while always transcendental to this world, showed the conditioned souls how they too could come to the stage of liberation by constantly thinking about Kṛṣṇa and serving Him, so that at the time of death they could return to Kṛṣṇa in the eternal, spiritual world. And Prabhupāda's lessons were always practical and universal. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, for example, were not mere theory but were practical and full of realized knowledge. And Prabhupāda practiced what he preached; his entire life was exemplary. He had been in family life, and even then he had vigorously preached, by starting his *Back to Godhead* magazine. In poverty and obscurity he had struggled to start a spiritual movement, and by the grace of Kṛṣṇa and his spiritual master, he had become successful. He had always shown by his humanlike attempts his willingness

to bravely take on austerity and face danger. He had shown exemplary spiritual life for all to try and follow. He had gone alone, in old age, to a foreign country and had chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa in a park in New York City, attracting the young men and women of America. Therefore everyone should take his example and try to serve Kṛṣṇa, despite the immediate impediments. Śrīla Prabhupāda encountered obstacles, yet by his free will and the help of Kṛṣṇa, he surmounted them. This was his wonderful example. It is said that Lord Caitanya, five hundred years ago, made surrender to Kṛṣṇa more attainable than Lord Kṛṣṇa had five thousand years ago. And now, in the twentieth century, Śrīla Prabhupāda has made Kṛṣṇa consciousness possible for people all over the world.

As part of his instruction and example, Śrīla Prabhupāda knew he would have to show people just how to die. He had escaped death a number of times—by Kṛṣṇa's grace, by the prayers of his disciples, and by his own pure and powerful will to propagate his movement. But from the signs given to him by Lord Kṛṣṇa in 1977, Śrīla Prabhupāda began decisively and conclusively ending his mission in the material world. And among his final duties was his giving complete guidelines on how to die. He was perfectly showing how to do that which everyone has to do, but which is most difficult to do successfully: die.

But a loving conflict was there. Prabhupāda loved his disciples. He also knew they were not yet fully mature. His movement already had great potency and stature in the world, and yet it had many enemies. He was inclined to always protect his devotees, his movement, and all living entities, even the animals. So when his most intimate and faithful disciples pleaded that they could not go on without him, he had turned from showing how to die, agreeing to stay with them and preach. But at what point would they ever be willing to let him go? At what point could he say that the world of *mayā* and the enemies of Kṛṣṇa were all gone? At what point would his disciples become fully mature?

In following his decision to stay, Śrīla Prabhupāda turned himself over to his disciples, allowing them to care for him completely. Those who took part recalled that never before had Śrīla Prabhupāda allowed such intimate dealings between himself and his disciples. The only thing comparable was in New York, in 1966, when he had been very intimate in dealing with the first persons to join him, persons who had known nothing of the etiquette of approaching a spiritual master. But those who were present now and who had also been present then said that these days were even more intimate.

At one point Kīrtanānanda firmly insisted that Śrīla Prabhupāda drink a full cup of juice, even when he said he had had enough. Kīrtanānanda felt awkward, insisting "I am not like mother Yaśodā that I can do this," he said "I keep remembering that you are my spiritual master." But Śrīla Prabhupāda allowed himself to be ordered by Kīrtanānanda. Similarly, Bhavānanda, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, Bhakti cāru, Upendra, and other servants coaxed Śrīla Prabhupāda to follow certain diets and cared for his body constantly. The other devotees were reminded of the story of Īśvara Purī, who gave intimate bodily service to his spiritual master, Mādhavendra Purī, when Mādhavendra was in the last stages of his life and apparently invalid. According to the *Caitanya caritāmṛta*, it was by this menial, bodily service that Īśvara Purī proved his love for his spiritual master and was allowed to become the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had deferred the lessons in dying in favor of giving his disciples an unparalleled opportunity to serve him in pure and simple love. And he allowed this not only for a few, but for whoever came to Vṛndāvana. Many came, and all were allowed to enter Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, massage his body, and sit with him as long as they liked, day and night, chanting the holy name for his pleasure. Śrīla Prabhupāda also recommenced his translating, and this was done openly. Whereas previously he had always worked in solitude, he now encouraged all devotees to come as he lay in bed dictating his Bhaktivedānta purports. He was giving himself completely and declaring it also, telling the devotees present, "Never leave me," and "I cannot live without your company." They had asked him to stay, and he had agreed, consigning himself completely to their care.

Those who were blessed to have this service felt themselves passing over all barriers of reluctance to serve, as well as all barriers of material desire. By intimately serving Śrīla Prabhupāda, they felt the strength of complete surrender and sensed that this would sustain them always even when Śrīla Prabhupāda eventually did depart from the world.

Prabhupāda also continued speaking as he had in recent months, about being unafraid of death and being fixed in transcendental knowledge. When receiving a presentation of some of his books recently printed in Portuguese by Hṛdayānanda Goswamī, Prabhupāda encouraged him and said, "This is life. The material world is just bones. The bones are not our real life. Our real concern is the living force. The bones may remain or go—it doesn't matter. The real life is sustaining the bones. There is even a history that there was a ṛṣi who had only bones. So there is a science by which you can sustain life by only bones. Hiraṇyakaśipu did it."

"You are also doing it, Śrīla Prabhupāda," Tamāla Kṛṣṇa said
 "So take care of the bones as long as possible," said Prabhupāda, "but the real life is here, always remember that The material world means we are simply all protecting bones and flesh together But they have no knowledge of what they are."

And when Ātreya Rṣi visited Śrīla Prabhupāda and asked that he visit Tehran, Prabhupāda said that he was ready to go, but, "Now you have to take a bundle of bones" These were, of course, the same themes that Prabhupāda had always taught, the same themes that were in his books But the lessons were more poignant and striking when Prabhupāda applied them to his own situation

More than one devotee compared Prabhupāda to Bhīṣmadeva, who gave important instructions in his last days As Bhīṣma felt no pain and delivered learned and loving discourses even from his "bed of arrows," and as Bhīṣma determined by his own will the time of his departure from the world, so Śrīla Prabhupāda spent his last days oblivious to his physical condition, defying death, and instructing his spiritually innocent sons But Prabhupāda's sons could no longer stand by and simply hear the philosophical lessons Prabhupāda had accepted their affection when they had cried for him to stay with them, and now they wanted to express that affection in the only world they understood, a world with Śrīla Prabhupāda living and talking with them, laughing or reprimanding them, as he liked They wanted him to eat and drink and become physically strong again

But again Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed to change, and he began refusing food and drink He had postponed his passing away to exchange lovingly with his disciples, and yet at the same time, by refusing to eat or drink, he was showing his preference for passing away He admitted, when pressed, that it was an impossible course of action—to live without food or drink Nor did he expect or want miracles If he was to get better, it would be by taking nourishment But for reasons of his own, he would not eat He said recovery was material, and he didn't want it

He kept closely in tune with the will of Kṛṣṇa, allowing the holy name to sustain him The doctors who came were often puzzled, but those who were Vaiṣṇavas understood and respected his prerogative Prabhupāda's servants made anxiety filled attempts to induce Prabhupāda to take regular treatment But Prabhupāda preferred to take only *kīrtana* and *Bhāgavatam*, while at the same time sustaining a willingness to live. He empathized with his disciples' anxiety and patiently explained the puzzling situation they were in He wanted their care, and he allowed them to try and treat

him, knowing that it was bringing them more and more into a surrender of love. But gradually it became more clear that Kṛṣṇa's will was indicating Prabhupāda's departure.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," Bhavānanda coaxed, always working on the assumption that Prabhupāda could stay if he wanted, "your presence on this planet is the only thing that's keeping the onslaught of the Kali-yuga from really taking effect. We have no idea even what will happen if you leave."

"It is not in my hands," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, with perfect clarity of consciousness. "Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma."

Śrīla Prabhupāda always spoke clearly, logically, and with complete devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Up until the last he dealt with practical matters, forming a Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust for reconstructing ancient temples in Bengal and arranging final details regarding ISKCON properties and monies. Through all dealings he stayed always alert, and he absorbed himself in *kīrtana* and *Bhāgavatam*.

But it became obvious to his disciples that, despite his promise, he was again moving inevitably towards giving the final lesson. He was teaching that love was beyond death, that a disciple's love could call the spiritual master back to the world to stay, and that a pure devotee has the ability to stay in the world beyond his allotted time. Meanwhile, however, he was progressing steadily to the final point. The devotees didn't feel angry with him or cheated that he was doing so. He had told them that he had free will given by Kṛṣṇa. And they also, by their free will, had asked him to stay, and he had agreed. But they knew he was not obliged. If, despite their prayers, Lord Kṛṣṇa was telling Śrīla Prabhupāda that he should come back home to Godhead, what could they do but accept? If Śrīla Prabhupāda was accepting, then they would accept also. Nothing, however, could change the fact of their surrendered love; it had now become a solid pact that could not be vanquished by any material changes. They had passed the test of eternal loving service, and that could not be taken away by death.

Up until the end there were interludes of sweetness as well as displays of Prabhupāda's indomitable mood of fighting for Kṛṣṇa. One day Prabhupāda's sister Pīśīmā arrived unexpectedly, and Prabhupāda asked her to cook *kichari*. At that time Kīrtanānanda was trying to put Prabhupāda on the road to recovery by gradually increasing his liquids, and Kīrtanānanda and the other devotees opposed the idea of his sud-

ly eating solid foods. But Śrīla Prabhupāda insisted.

"It doesn't matter whether what she cooks does good to me or bad," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "She is a Vaiṣṇavī. It will be good for me." He then began speaking in an extremely humble way. "Probably I became a little puffed up because of my opulence and success," he said. "Now God has shattered that pride. If you don't have your body, what is there to be puffed up about?"

Bhakti-cāru Swami protested, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, whatever you have done, you have done for Kṛṣṇa."

"That may be, but in this world, unknowingly you commit offenses." When Piśimā heard this, she exclaimed, "No, no, he never committed any offense."

"You cannot ever commit offenses," said Bhakti-cāru. "You are God's very dear one. How can you commit offenses?"

"I am a little temperamental," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "I used to use words like *rascal* and so on. I never compromised. They used to call it 'A club in one hand and a *Bhāgavatam* in the other.' That is how I preach. Anyway, make arrangements for my sister."

There were also visits from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Godbrothers, and again Prabhupāda asked forgiveness for his offenses. One time, Niskācana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī, Purī Mahārāja, Āśrama Mahārāja, Ānanda Prabhu, Puruṣottama Brahmācārī, and about twenty others came and sat next to Prabhupāda's bed. He was resting when they arrived, and they joined the *kīrtana* until he awoke. When he saw them, he asked to be raised up. Sitting in the center of his bed with his Godbrothers all around, he addressed them.

"All over the world there is a beautiful field to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness," he said. "I didn't care whether I would be successful or not. People are willing to take. They are all taking also. If we preach together, the saying of Mahāprabhu, *prthivīte*, will come true. We have everything. Spread the holy name and distribute *prasādam*. There is a beautiful field. In Africa, in Russia, everywhere they're accepting."

When Prabhupāda began asking his Godbrothers to forgive him, they protested. "You are the eternal leader," one of them asserted. "You rule over us, guide us, and chastise us."

"Forgive all my offenses," Prabhupāda repeated. "I became proud of all my opulence."

"No," said Purī Mahārāja, "you never became proud. When you started preaching, opulence and success followed you. That was the blessing of

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. There cannot be any question of your being offensive."

When Śrīla Prabhupāda presented himself as *mahā-patita*, greatly fallen, Puri Mahārāja did not accept it. "You have saved millions of people around the world," he said. "Therefore there is no question of offenses. But you should be called *mahā-patita-pāvana* [the great savior of the fallen]."

Prabhupāda's disciples regarded Prabhupāda's asking for his Godbrothers' forgiveness as a manifestation of his humility. But they were also puzzled. Certainly Prabhupāda's Godbrothers were sincere in saying Prabhupāda had committed no offense. Whatever he had done, he had done for Kṛṣṇa. But Śrīla Prabhupāda was also sincere in asking for forgiveness. That was the beautiful gem of his humility—to ask everyone for forgiveness.

For the purpose of preaching, displaying this gem had not always been the most effective way to spread the merciful teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa in every town and village. But now it could be displayed. In London and now in Vṛndāvana, Prabhupāda was showing his disciples extra affection and gratitude, without the reprimands usually necessary in training disciples. This attitude of complete humility was a symptom of the highest stage of devotional life. Śrīla Prabhupāda had explained in his books that the *madhyamādhikārī*, the second-class devotee, makes distinctions between the devotees, the innocent nondevotees, and the demons, whereas the *mahā-bhāgavata*, or first-class devotee, sees everyone—except himself—as a servant of God. Sometimes, however, the *mahā-bhāgavata* desires to come down from the first-class platform to the second-class platform, just to take up the most compassionate service of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda's disciples had all read of the *mahā-bhāgavata* stage in the scriptures, and now they were seeing it fully displayed, as Prabhupāda referred to himself as the most fallen and asked for everyone's forgiveness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had heard of the program of his disciple Lokānātha Swami, who was taking a small group of men on a bullock cart and preaching in villages throughout India. Lokānātha had told Śrīla Prabhupāda how in the course of their travels they had recently visited *īrthas* such as Badarikāśrama and Bhīm Kapur. Śrīla Prabhupāda was enlivened to hear this, and he then evolved a transcendental desire to go himself on a cart pulled by bullocks to circumambulate the area of

Vṛndāvana. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and Bhavānanda, who were serving Prabhupāda with increased intimacy, felt themselves unable to support Śrīla Prabhupāda in his desire, since they thought his fragile body could not survive such rough treatment on the roads.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda reasoned that, "Dying on *parikrama* is glorious," and he asked them to take him. A controversy developed among the devotees, as some said Prabhupāda's will to go on *parikrama* should be immediately honored as an order from the spiritual master; he wanted it, and he should not be denied. The doctor, however, assured them that Śrīla Prabhupāda's body would not survive the jostling of the cart. The many devotees who crowded around Śrīla Prabhupāda's bed held different opinions, and Prabhupāda could see this. Following his request, however, Lokanātha went out and hired a cart with bullocks and prepared it for the ride. Lokanātha and Hamsadūta suggested that the *parikrama* could go to the city of Vṛndāvana or visit the seven main temples of the Gosvāmīs. But then they said that since the next day was Govardhana-pūjā, Prabhupāda could go to Govardhana Hill. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, Bhavānanda, and Bhakti-cāru, however, protested adamantly against the *parikrama*.

"One-day experiment," Prabhupāda said. "It is for one day. Rest assured I will not die in one day." He liked the idea of going to Govardhana. "And we shall make our cooking there," he said. Lokanātha Swami, he assured them, was experienced. "Make very good picnic," he said.

After discussing back and forth, the devotees finally decided that early the next morning they would take Śrīla Prabhupāda in a bullock cart to Govardhana. The majority of the devotees then left Śrīla Prabhupāda alone for the night.

Later that night Śrīla Prabhupāda received a visit from Niṣkiñcana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī, who sat with Prabhupāda, chanting and sometimes speaking in Bengali. Suddenly, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa and Bhavānanda came to Prabhupāda's bedside. They were in tears and beside themselves with anxiety.

Prabhupāda understood. "You request me not to go?" he asked.

"Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "I'll tell you, I'm getting so upset sitting in the room upstairs. I was walking around. Two of the devotees told me that this road is so bad that if you go on this road you're going to be jolted back and forth. The road is terrible. I just can't understand, Śrīla Prabhupāda, why it has to be tomorrow that we have to go. Of anybody that wants you to travel, I do. But why do we have to go when you're in this condition? I can't understand it. Why are we

throwing everything out the window that we must go tomorrow? I can't understand."

"All right," said Śrīla Prabhupāda softly, immediately agreeing to their proposal that he not go.

"Jaya, Śrīla Prabhupāda!" said Bhakti-cāru, who was also present.

"Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Bhavānanda with great relief.

"All right. You're satisfied?"

"Now I am, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Bhavānanda. "Yes. I was in too much anxiety."

"Never mind. I shall not put you in anxiety."

"Actually, Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "we're so much attached to you that you practically drive us to madness sometimes. Tonight we were becoming mad."

"No, no, I shall not do that," said Prabhupāda. "Bābājī Mahārāja," Prabhupāda turned to Niṣkiñcana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī and said, "—just see how much affection they have for me."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda," said Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, "the way you deal with us simply deepens our attachment every moment."

"It is my duty," said Prabhupāda, and the devotees laughed warmly, understanding. Yes, they could understand—that was his duty. By all his actions and dealings, Prabhupāda's intention was to capture spirit souls and deliver them to Kṛṣṇa. His method was loving service, but he did not do it for himself. He was delivering them to Kṛṣṇa. That was his duty.

On November 14, 1977, at 7:30 P.M., in his room at the Krishna-Balaram Mandir in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his final instruction by leaving this mortal world and going back to Godhead.

His departure was exemplary, because his whole life was exemplary. His departure marked the completion of a lifetime of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. A few days before the end, Śrīla Prabhupāda had said he was instructing as far as he could, and his secretary had added, "You are the inspiration" "Yes," Śrīla Prabhupāda had replied, "that I shall do until the last breathing."

Prabhupāda's "last breathing" was glorious, not because of any last-minute mystical demonstration, but because Śrīla Prabhupāda remained in perfect Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Like grandfather Bhīṣmadeva, he remained completely collected and noble and grave, teaching until the end. He was preaching that life comes from life, not from matter, and he was showing

that one should preach with every breath he has. The many devotees who crowded the large room bore witness that up to the very end, Prabhupāda remained exactly the same. There was nothing suddenly incongruous with what he had previously shown and taught them. At the time of his departure, therefore, he was teaching how to die, by always depending on Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda's passing away was peaceful. During the evening of November 14, the *kaviraja* asked him, "Is there anything you want?" and Prabhupāda replied faintly, *kuch iccha nahīm* "I have no desire." His passing away was in the perfect situation in Vṛndāvana, with devotees. A few months previously, a young girl, the daughter of one of Prabhupāda's disciples, had passed away in Vṛndāvana, and when Śrīla Prabhupāda had been asked if she went back to Godhead to personally associate with Kṛṣṇa, he had said, "Yes, anyone who leaves his body in Vṛndāvana is liberated."

Of course, "Vṛndāvana" also means the state of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As Advaita Ācārya had said of Lord Caitanya, "Wherever You are is Vṛndāvana." And this was also true of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Had Śrīla Prabhupāda passed away in London, New York, or Moscow, therefore, his destination would have been the same. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad gītā*, "One who is always thinking of Me, surely he attains to Me." But because Vṛndāvana dhāma is the quintessential realm of Kṛṣṇa consciousness within the universe, the ideal place for departure from this world, so it was yet another exemplary feature of Śrīla Prabhupāda's life that he went back to Godhead with Vṛndāvana as his last junction.

Those Vaiṣṇavas who had taken the vow never to risk leaving Vṛndāvana could see that Śrīla Prabhupāda, after sacrificing everything—including the benefit of residing in Vṛndāvana—to deliver fallen souls in the most godforsaken locations of the world, had returned to the holy land of Vṛndāvana and from there had departed for the original abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual sky. As stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, "Anyone who executes service in Vṛndāvana certainly goes back to home, back to Godhead, after giving up his body."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure was also perfect because he was chanting and hearing the holy names of God. Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead was present at Śrīla Prabhupāda's passing just as He was at the celebrated passing away of Bhīṣmadeva, who said, "Despite His being equally kind to everyone, He has graciously come before me while I am ending my life, for I am His unflinching servitor." As Lord Kṛṣṇa came before Bhīṣmadeva, assuring him and everyone else that Bhīṣma was returning back to Godhead on leaving his body, so the Lord in His

incarnation of *namāvatāra*, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, was present for Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's life had been dedicated to spreading the holy name to every town and village, and for a month he had been surrounding himself with the holy name. For his passing away, he especially wanted to fill the room with devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa fulfilled that wish. Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, departed under the most favorable circumstances possible—in the most sacred place, Vṛndāvana, surrounded by Vaiṣṇavas chanting the holy name.

An ideal spiritual teacher (*ācārya*) always acts in such a way that others may follow his example. As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states, these great souls who cross over the ocean of birth and death by taking shelter of the "boat" of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa miraculously leave the boat on this side for others to use. And Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance, by its perfect example, affords all conditioned souls the means for meeting the greatest of all dangers. An auspicious death is not merely a matter of psychological adjustment, so that one may die without regret or without becoming unduly upset. The real point is that at the time of death the soul must leave the body and take his next birth. Only the Kṛṣṇa conscious soul can leave this world of birth and death and attain an eternal, blissful life in the spiritual world. Therefore one's life is tested at death.

Death means the soul cannot stand to live in the body anymore. Whatever the material cause may be, the situation has become unbearable for the soul. And leaving the body causes great distress. The *śāstras*, therefore, advise us to get free from the cycle of repeated birth and death. Meeting an inauspicious death and being dragged down to a lower birth is the most fearful thing for the living being. So fearful is it that we may try to ignore death altogether. Death is painful because the eternal spirit soul is placed in a most unnatural situation: although he is eternal and should not have to die, he is forced to die because of his connection with the material body. At death, the eternal soul is forced to leave the body for a destination he knows not. Thus he is full of fear and suffering. The pain and fear are usually overwhelming, and one thinks only of material attachments or bodily pain. Therefore King Kulaśekhara prayed, and Prabhupāda often quoted, "Please let me pass away, not in some prolonged contemplation of my bodily death, but just while I'm chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. If I can meditate on You and then pass from this body, that will be perfection."

Over the last months of his life in this world, Śrīla Prabhupāda taught

how it is possible to meet death step by step in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In his last days, he told one of his *sannyāsīs*, "Don't think this isn't going to happen to you." Prabhupāda came into this world, on Kṛṣṇa's request, to teach us how to live a pure life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that includes how to finally pass away from this world to attain eternal life. Prabhupāda underwent death in a way that was perfect and glorious, and at the same time in a way which we can all follow. When we have to go, we can cling to the memory of how a great soul left his body—always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, surrounding himself with the medicine of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, always desiring to hear about Kṛṣṇa, and practicing detachment from the misery of the material condition. This last lesson was one of the most wonderful and important instructions Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us. He taught by his life, by his books, and at the end by his dying. Education in how to die is meant especially for the human being. An animal dies, and a human being also dies; but a human being is supposed to understand the process of going back to the spiritual world at the time of death. Remaining always fixed and undisturbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Prabhupāda expertly taught the process. His passing away, therefore, was a perfect lesson, and one that can be faithfully followed.

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While there was nothing lamentable for Śrīla Prabhupāda in his departing from the world and going back to Godhead, it was certainly lamentable for his followers and for the people of the whole world, who became bereft of the presence of their greatest well-wisher and benefactor. Śrīla Prabhupāda had written in a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport, "When the mortal body of the spiritual master expires, the disciple should cry exactly like the queen cries when the king leaves his body." At the departure of his own spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda had written, "On that day, O my Master, I made a cry of grief; I was not able to tolerate the absence of you, my *guru*." And so on November 14, 1977, as the powerful news spread around the world, those who knew and loved Śrīla Prabhupāda were gripped by a fearful, unrestricted grief. They saw everything around them in the overwhelming atmosphere of separation from Śrīla Prabhupāda. They turned for solace to Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

However, the disciples and the spiritual master are never separated, because the spiritual master always keeps company with the disciple.

as long as the disciple follows the instructions of the spiritual master. This is called the association of *vānL*. Physical presence is called *vapuh*. As long as the spiritual master is physically present, the disciple should serve the physical body of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master is no longer physically existing, the disciples should serve the instructions of the spiritual master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples were already carrying out his instructions, but now they would have to do so without the *vapuh*, without the opportunity of regularly seeing and being with him. At first this was very difficult for them to face, but those who were sincere soon realized that Śrīla Prabhupāda had, upon his departure, given them the greatest gift of all: service in separation.

Service in separation is the highest realization and ecstasy. This was the teaching of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in regard to Lord Kṛṣṇa and His foremost devotees, the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana. When Kṛṣṇa left His beloved *gopīs* and went to Mathurā, never to return to them in Vṛndāvana, the *gopīs* (and all the other residents of Vṛndāvana) wept piteously in separation. They so much loved Kṛṣṇa that they could not live without Him, and to maintain their lives they began to constantly remember and discuss His name, fame, form, and entourage. By constantly remembering Him in love and by anticipating His return to Vṛndāvana, they achieved an ecstasy of *union in separation*, which Caudīya Vaiṣṇava scholars declare to be superior even to the ecstasy the *gopīs* felt in Kṛṣṇa's presence. Because Kṛṣṇa is absolute, even remembering Him or chanting His name puts the devotee into direct contact with Him. But because there is simultaneously a feeling of separation from Him, there is an added dimension of inconceivable, simultaneous union and separation. This is the epitome of Kṛṣṇa conscious realization.

Prabhupāda's followers knew this principle of service in separation, technically known as *vipralambha sevā*, but to most devotees it was a theoretical realization. Before one can feel intense loving separation from Kṛṣṇa, one must first feel intense attraction to Him. But for the conditioned soul who has forgotten and abandoned Kṛṣṇa and has come to the material world under the spell of *māyā*, illusion—for him, "separation" from Kṛṣṇa is based on complete ignorance and forgetfulness.

In coming to spiritual life, a neophyte first begins to awaken to the very existence of God, as he overcomes atheistic misconceptions. Next, he comes gradually, through practice, to take up a relationship of service to Kṛṣṇa,

through serving the spiritual master. Intense love of Kṛṣṇa in separation is the most advanced stage and cannot possibly be realized in full by the neophyte. Thus service in separation had remained a theoretical teaching to many of Prabhupāda's followers.

But when Śrīla Prabhupāda departed from the world and left his disciples to carry on his mission, they immediately realized union with him in separation. He was gone, but he was still very much present. This realization was not a pretention or a myth, nor was it sentimental psychic phenomena—telepathy, "communion with the dead," or so on. It was a completely substantive, practical, palpable reality, a fact of life. Śrīla Prabhupāda had given them personal service, and now they would continue that service. Prabhupāda was still present through his instructions, and all the nectar of his direct association—all the nectar of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that he had given and shared with them—was still available.

Service in separation for Prabhupāda's disciples was undoubtedly a fact, otherwise, now that they were without his personal presence, how were they able to sustain themselves in spiritual life? The fact that they could continue as before, increase their feelings of devotion, and even increase their serving capacity, meant that Śrīla Prabhupāda was very much still with them. As Śrīla Prabhupāda's last instruction was the lesson of how a human being should die, he now taught, beyond dying, how to practically implement the highest philosophical teachings of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

This realization gave the devotees great hope that Śrīla Prabhupāda and the revolutionary life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness he had brought with him were not finished upon his departure. Often when a great personality dies, his contribution collapses; but Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence remained and expanded, sustaining his devotees' lives. He was still in charge.

EPILOGUE

In describing how the followers of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda continue to relish the nectar of serving him in separation, we are not speaking of only a small band of several thousand devotees whom he initiated during his lifetime. Śrīla Prabhupāda was not only an *ācārya*, but he was the founder-*ācārya* of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, which is a dynamic spiritual reality. That reality is nothing less than the *yuga-dharma*, or the form of spiritual life recommended

for all humanity in the present age of Kali, the most dangerous of ages, in which humanity eventually abandons all religious principles.

The ultimate goal of human life was taught by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, when He declared, "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear." Kṛṣṇa taught this five thousand years ago, when He appeared in the world, but people have misinterpreted and misunderstood what Kṛṣṇa meant. Lord Caitanya advented, therefore, to revive the original message of surrender to Kṛṣṇa, primarily by introducing the *sankīrtana* movement of chanting the holy names of God.

Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya appearing in the nineteenth century, foresaw that Lord Caitanya's *sankīrtana* principles could and would be introduced all over the world. He had studied deeply many other religions and philosophies, but he felt that Lord Caitanya's *sankīrtana* was universal, the essence of religious life able to unite all people and bring them to perfection. Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura's son was Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati, who became the spiritual master of Śrīla Prabhupāda and who ordered Śrīla Prabhupāda to implement the vision of worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness by going to preach in the West.

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda is, therefore, to be appreciated not only as the *guru* of a few intimate servants or even the *guru* of a single generation of disciples. As the founder-*ācārya* of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, he introduced the standard of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as it can be practiced by all sincere followers for thousands of years to come.

The scriptures predict that although the present age is constantly becoming more inauspicious, unfortunate, and degraded, for a period of ten thousand years from the time of Lord Caitanya's advent a golden age of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can appear, despite the force of Kali-yuga. Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, prepared his translations and Bhaktivedānta purports on the essential Vaiṣṇava scriptures—*Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*—with the plan that they would form the foundation of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for ten thousand years.

We cannot limit Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, by describing him only within the drama of his being the *guru* for one generation of followers. Śrīla Prabhupāda is *jagad guru*, the spiritual master of the entire world. He is a bona fide spiritual master, faithfully conveying the message of the disciplic succession from Lord Kṛṣṇa, as he received it in *paramparā* from his spiritual master. But more than that, he was empowered by Kṛṣṇa

to do what no other spiritual master has ever done. He is the founder-*ācārya* for spreading Lord Caitanya's *sankīrtana* worldwide in the midst of the age of Kali.

Anyone who wants shelter from the evil effects of the present godless age can have it by taking up devotional service under the guidance of Lord Caitanya's teachings as given by Prabhupāda. The dynamic preaching and realizations of Śrīla Prabhupāda reveal the sublime teachings of Lord Caitanya, which otherwise have been neglected, misused, and kept within the confines of India. Śrīla Prabhupāda was actually able to understand Lord Caitanya's prediction that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would spread to every town and village in the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had faith in these words and personally saw in his lifetime that pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness could be adopted by people of all races and cultures, even those considered by Vedic standards to be aborigines and outcasts. Through the applications of Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is now proven to be viable for anyone, anywhere in the world.

Anyone can serve Śrīla Prabhupāda in separation. He asked all his followers to avoid four sinful activities—meat-eating, intoxication, illicit sex, and gambling—and to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* a minimum of sixteen rounds daily on beads. He also advised that one regularly read Vedic literatures such as *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And for keeping spiritual health and strength to follow the spiritual principles, he advised that one associate with like-minded devotees. Whoever follows these basic practices and recognizes Śrīla Prabhupāda as the direct representative of Kṛṣṇa is his follower. And the Vedic scriptures say that only by serving the representative of Kṛṣṇa can one become dear to Kṛṣṇa Himself.

The ways of serving Kṛṣṇa are unlimited, as Śrīla Prabhupāda expertly displayed. He invited scientists, artists, philosophers, and businessmen to serve Kṛṣṇa according to their occupations and capabilities. The artist, instead of painting pictures out of his imagination or making renderings of the material energy, can paint pictures depicting Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. The poet can describe Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute Truth; the philosopher can explain Kṛṣṇa as the cause of all causes; the scientist can prove that life comes from life; and the businessman can contribute money to the worthiest welfare activity of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A person does not, therefore, have to abandon his family or retreat to a solitary cave to realize God. In any situation of life one can move from mundane

to spiritual by adopting the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the broad and liberal way Śrīla Prabhupāda intended Kṛṣṇa consciousness to pervade society.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Prabhupāda's own society of devotees, is meant to help all persons interested in developing spiritual life under Śrīla Prabhupāda's guidance. ISKCON was Prabhupāda's organization for establishing and proliferating temple worship, book printing and distribution, and communities where devotees could live and serve together in close association. Prabhupāda therefore entrusted all his properties, including the magnificent temples he had built in India, to ISKCON, for the protection and perpetuation of his work. And he instructed his disciples to show their love for him by always cooperating among themselves to expand further the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

When a disciple expressed his appreciation of Prabhupāda's magnificent quarters in Bombay, Prabhupāda replied, "I cannot take these with me. I am leaving them for you to use."

The essential gifts of Kṛṣṇa consciousness which Prabhupāda brought are for everyone. Although most people do not know it, they are actually hankering for the happiness of genuine spiritual life. Prabhupāda, out of compassion, wanted to distribute the gifts of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to all the hungry people in the world. These gifts—peace of mind, satisfaction, freedom from anxiety—can be obtained by anyone who takes wholeheartedly to devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This pure, happy state can be realized by receiving the ongoing, dynamic legacy which Prabhupāda left: his books, his devotees, his Kṛṣṇa consciousness society, and his method of expertly applying Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every situation in the modern context. Whoever intelligently takes up the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness will also inherit the most wonderful realization in his relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

We hope that the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* will help the readers in establishing their relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Its contribution is in the mood of remembering Śrīla Prabhupāda in separation. Remembering his pastimes puts one into direct contact with him and with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this remembrance can free one from bondage to material life and enable one to taste the nectar of the eternal pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His associates in the spiritual world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's life did not end on November 14, 1977. And we

hope that the readers of *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* will not feel they have finished their connection with this literature by having read it once. *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* can be read regularly, from beginning to end. Our hope is that by hearing about Śrīla Prabhupāda the reader will become himself a Prabhupādānuga, a follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda. We can wish no better fortune upon anyone.

THUS ENDS THE SIXTH VOLUME OF THE *ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA-LĪLĀMRṬA*, COMPLETED ON NOVEMBER 9, 1982, IN THE KĀRTIKA SEASON, AT THE ISKCON KRISHNA-BALARAM MANDIR IN VRNDĀVANA.

Appendixes

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Sanskrit Pronunciation Guide

Throughout the centuries, the Sanskrit language has been written in a variety of alphabets. The mode of writing most widely used throughout India, however, is called *devanāgarī*, which means, literally, the writing used in "the cities of the demigods." The *devanāgarī* alphabet consists of forty-eight characters, including thirteen vowels and thirty-five consonants. Ancient Sanskrit grammarians arranged the alphabet according to practical linguistic principles, and this order has been accepted by all Western scholars. The system of transliteration used in this book conforms to a system that scholars in the last fifty years have accepted to indicate the pronunciation of each Sanskrit sound.

The short vowel *a* is pronounced like the *u* in *but*, long *ā* like the *a* in *far*, and short *i* like the *i* in *pin*. Long *ī* is pronounced as in *pique*, short *u* as in *pull*, and long *ū* as in *rule*. The vowel *ṛ* is pronounced like the *ri* in *rim*. The vowel *e* is pronounced as in *they*, *ai* as in *aisle*, *o* as in *go*, and *au* as in *how*. The *anusvāra* (*m̐*), which is a pure nasal, is pronounced like the *n* in the French word *bon*, and *visarga* (*ḥ*), which is a strong aspirate, is pronounced as a final *h* sound. Thus *aḥ* is pronounced like *aha*, and *iḥ* like *ihi*.

The guttural consonants—*k*, *kh*, *g*, *gh*, and *ṅ*—are pronounced from the throat in much the same manner as in English. *K* is pronounced as in *kite*, *kh* as in *Eckhart*, *g* as in *give*, *gh* as in *dig hard*, and *ṅ* as in *sing*. The palatal consonants—*c*, *ch*, *j*, *jh*, and *ñ*—are pronounced from the palate with the middle of the tongue. *C* is pronounced as in *chair*, *ch* as in *staunch-heart*, *j* as in *joy*, *jh* as in *hedgehog*, and *ñ* as in *canyon*. The cerebral consonants—*ṭ*, *ṭh*, *ḍ*, *ḍh*, and *ṇ*—are pronounced with the tip of the tongue turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate. *Ṭ* is pronounced as in *tub*, *ṭh* as in *light-heart*, *ḍ* as in *dove*, *ḍh* as in *red-hot*, and *ṇ* as in *nut*. The dental consonants—*t*, *th*, *d*, *dh*, and *n*—are pronounced in the same manner as the cerebrals, but with the forepart of the tongue against the teeth. The labial consonants—*p*, *ph*, *b*, *bh*, and *m*—are pronounced with the lips. *P* is pronounced as in *pine*, *ph* as in *uphill*, *b* as in *bird*, *bh* as in *rub-hard*, and *m* as in *mother*. The semivowels—*y*, *r*, *l*, and *v*—are pronounced as in *yes*, *run*, *light*, and *vine* respectively. The sibilants *ś*, *ṣ*, and *s*—are pronounced, respectively, as in the German word *sprechen* and the English words *shine* and *sun*. The letter *h* is pronounced as in *home*.

Glossary

A

Ācārya—one who teaches by example.

Āratī—a ceremony for worshiping the Deity of the Lord with offerings of food, lamps, fans, flowers, and incense.

Arjuna—the intimate devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa who heard the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* from Him on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra.

Āyur Vedic medicine—a system of medicine based on the *Vedas*.

B

Balarāma—the first expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa, appearing as His elder brother.

Bhagavad-gītā—"Song of God"; the essential summary of spiritual knowledge spoken to Arjuna by the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Bhakti—devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu—Rūpa Gosvāmī's definitive explanation of devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura—the spiritual master of A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Brahmacārī—a celibate monk; the first of the four *āśramas*, or spiritual orders of life.

Bṛhat-mṛdaṅga—the *kīrtana* of God which can be heard all over the world by the distribution of transcendental knowledge.

C

Caitanya-caritāmṛta—the standard biography of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, written by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the *avatāra* of Lord Kṛṣṇa in this age whose mission is to teach love of God through the chanting of His holy names.

D

Daṇḍavats—prostrate obeisances.

Darśana—audience with a revered personality or a Deity.

Dhāma—a holy place; an eternal abode of the Supreme Lord.

Dhotī—the standard Indian men's garment, a simple piece of cloth wrapped around the lower body.

G

Gamchā—a short cloth wrapped around the lower part of the body.

Gaudiya Math—the mission established in India by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Ghee—clarified butter used as oil in cooking.

Gopīs—the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana, who are the most advanced and intimate devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Gṛhastha—one who is practicing spiritual life while living with wife and children; the second *āśrama*, or spiritual order.

Gurukula—the school of the spiritual master.

Guru-pūjā—a ceremony for worshipping the *guru* (spiritual master)

I

ISKCON—International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

J

Jagannātha—"Lord of the universe"; a special Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa, originating in Orissa on the east coast of India at Puri.

Japa—chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* softly for one's personal benefit.

K

Kali-yuga—the present age of confusion and quarrel, which began five thousand years ago.

Karatālas—sacred hand-cymbals.

Karma—fruitive action, for which there is always a reaction, good or bad.

Kicharī—a cooked preparation made from rice and lentils.

Kīrtana—glorification of God, especially by the chanting of His holy names.

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Kṣatriya—the administrative and protective occupation according to the system of social and spiritual orders

L

Līlā—pastimes of the Supreme Lord

M

Mangala-arati—the first worship ceremony of the day, observed before sunrise

Mantra—a sound vibration that liberates the mind

Māyā—the external energy of the Supreme Lord

Mleccha—meat eater

Mūḍhas—fools, rascals

Mrdanga—a sacred drum, made of clay, used in *kīrtana*

N

Nityānanda—the chief associate of Lord Caitanya

P

Pandāl—a tent

Pandita—a scholar

Prabhupāda—"the spiritual master at whose feet all others take shelter"

Prasādam—food spiritualized by first being offered to the Supreme Lord for His enjoyment

Pūjārī—a priest engaged in worshipping the Deity

Purīs—puffy wheat breads fried in *ghee*.

R

Rādhā(rānī)—the eternal consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa and manifestation of His internal pleasure potency

Rasagulā—a milk sweet made from curd soaked in sweet water

Ratha-yātrā—the annual cart festival of Lord Jagannātha

S

Sādhu—a saintly person

Sabji—cooked vegetables

Saṅkīrtana—congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord, the recommended process of *yoga* for this age.

Sannyāsī—one in the *sannyasa* order.

Śāstra—scripture.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the voluminous scripture composed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva to describe and explain Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Subhadrā—the younger sister of Lord Kṛṣṇa and personification of His spiritual potency.

T

Tiffin—a stacked set of metal food containers.

Tilaka—sacred clay marking the body of a devotee as a temple of God.

V

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of Viṣṇu (or Kṛṣṇa)

Vyāsāsana—the honored seat of the spiritual master.

Y

Yajña—sacrifice

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The Author

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami was born on December 6, 1939, in New York City. He attended public schools and received a B.A. from Brooklyn College in 1961. Then followed two years as a journalist in the U.S. navy and three years as a social worker in New York City.

In July 1966, he met His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and he became his initiated disciple in September of that year. Satsvarupa dasa Goswami began contributing articles to *Back to Godhead*, the magazine of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, and later became its editor in chief. In August 1967 he went to Boston to establish the first ISKCON center there. Satsvarupa dasa Goswami was one of the original members selected by Śrīla Prabhupada to form the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON in 1970. He remained as president of Boston ISKCON until 1971, when he moved to Dallas and became headmaster of Gurukula, the first ISKCON school for children.

In May 1972, on the appearance day of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, he was awarded the *sannyasa* (renounced) order by His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda and began traveling across the United States, lecturing in colleges and universities. In January 1974 he was called by Śrīla Prabhupāda to become his personal secretary and to travel with him through India and Europe. In 1976 he published *Readings in Vedic Literature*, a concise account of the Vedic tradition. The volume is now being studied at various American universities. In 1977 Śrīla Prabhupāda ordered him to accept the duties of initiating *guru*, along with ten other senior disciples. Since completing the biography of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupāda he has continued to write prolifically. Currently he has several new works, both prose and poetry in production.